

TOWARDS MODERNISATION OF ROAD SIGNAGES

Last few decades have seen a phenomenal rise in the number of vehicles on the roads in India. At the same time, we have also witnessed manifold increase in the rates of accidents, which are amongst the highest in the world. It is common in India, that drivers and road users in general, often forget that roads are not just for them alone and show scant respect for the traffic rules, particularly the road signages. This makes the pedestrians, cyclists, children and elderly people highly vulnerable to the road accidents. The need of the hour is, therefore, that the traffic controlling signages must be observed in totality by all the categories of road users.

Traffic signs form an integral part of the road landscape and are an essential tool for communicating with the road users. Properly installed road signs help to:

Keep the speeds within the prescribed speed limits.

Get into the correct lane in good time.

Concentrate on the road ahead.

Be alert for traffic leaving or entering the road.

- Keep a safe distance between the vehicles.

Traffic signs must convey their messages to road users clearly at the correct time and at the correct place. The language used on road signs must, therefore, be clear and easy enough for everyone to understand. To enable these signs to be detected and read during night as well as by day, it is necessary for them to be illuminated

either by direct lighting or by reflectorization. Generally, the target value of a traffic sign is its inherent ability to attract a driver's attention and increasing the target value of a sign means increasing the distance from which it can be detected and recognized. Early detection means that a driver has more reaction time to decide and interpret its message.

The spate of development of motor vehicle technology combined with manifold increase in traffic and development of modernized highway infrastructure such as expressways, high speed major arterial roads, etc. demands that such facilities are constructed duly addressing the enhanced speeds of vehicles using such facilities, their safety aspects, besides regulation and enforcement so that a safe transportation system is developed. The enhancement of road safety depends to a great extent upon setting up of effective signage systems, so that the road users are acquainted with the features of the road in a most meaningful manner. Such systems will help to minimize the reaction time of the drivers and to avert potential dangerous situations, thereby enabling smooth movement of traffic.

Technology continues to move forward and over the last few years we have seen the introduction of a new generation of traffic signages to suit the requirements of both the drivers and the vehicles. Most motorways in the UK have big electronic displays that can give travelers advance information about special events, like a queue at the next intersection etc. Since, language can be a barrier in understanding