

PJ-E3.

EFFECT OF VEHICLE CONDITION ON ROAD SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE

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Safety on roads is indeed one of the main problems facing modern societies. In fact the road accidents now reached to the ninth most affected reason for the deaths. According to a study carried out by T.R.L.-U.K. road accidents will be the third main man killer in year 2020.

Road safety depends on many factors such as road condition, vehicle condition, behavior of drivers etc. But in truth, it is the people and their shortcomings are behind almost all the accidents.

Due to the open economic policy adopted by the country our roads are flooded with too many vehicles. This excessive amount of vehicles cause for massive traffic jams and accidents. It has been stated that, the number of vehicles that are registered in every year is increasing rapidly. For an example in 1975 there was 200,000 vehicles registered. But in 1998 it was 1,500,000. From this registered vehicles 50% are motorbikes. It is also stated that average of 80,000 new vehicles are imported to our country each year. By observing these figures any one can realize how complex is our traffic composition.

To find out the effect of vehicle condition on road safety we started a study with a traffic survey. There we investigated the roadworthiness of vehicles. At the same time we distributed a questionnaire to find out drivers' viewpoint. In addition we collected information from near by police stations. At this point especially we tried to find out the accidents related to bad vehicle conditions. The Central Provincial Council gave us data about issuing fitness certificates, which is one of the major factors related to the vehicle condition on the road. Having knowing that we visited several garages in the Kandy to collect data about there proceedings. Mahanuwara bus company and private bus owners' society also gave us certain data such as fleet strength, bus accidents, bus maintenance procedure etc.

In our traffic survey we found that large number of vehicles is not up to the standard, further driver's knowledge about traffic rules is law. From the details obtained from the police it is clear that the rate of accidents are increasing. In fitness certificate procedure we observed that here are lot of malpractices. It is an area, which should be amended. One of our proposals is to check the educational qualifications of the applicants before issuing a driving license. At least the applicant should pass in O/L exam. Malpractices in driving test should be identified and eliminated quickly.

The authorities can no longer treat the problem in high way as a minor problem because it costs billions to keep this erratic system going. So quick amendment to the system is needed.