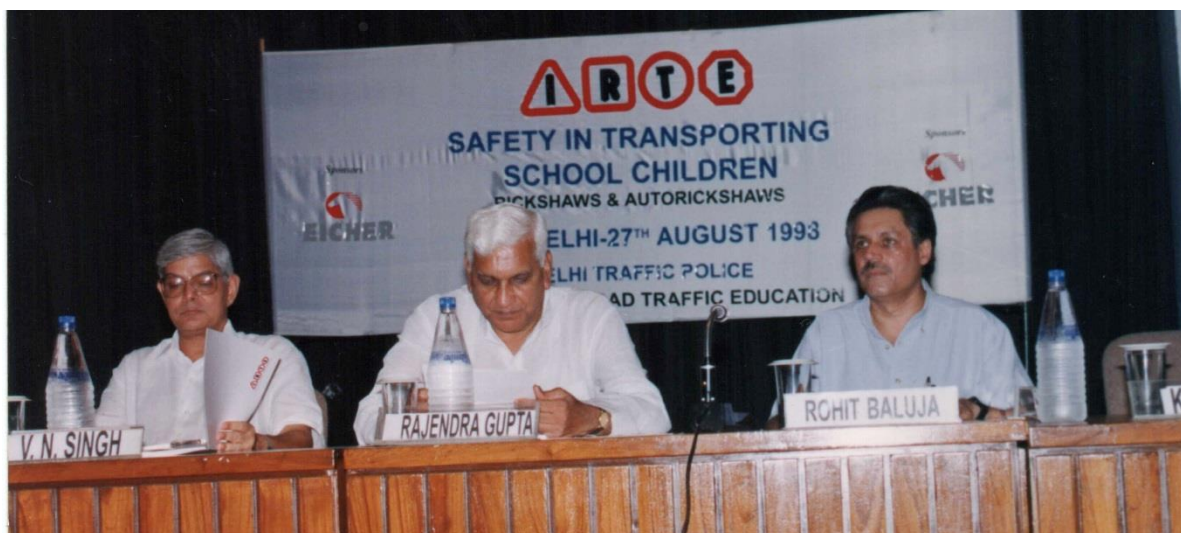


Initiative towards Safe Transportation of School Children

Accidents involving children while being transported to and from school are by no means a rare or recent phenomenon. However, the sheer non-availability of statistics has failed to highlight the gravity of the situation. Recognising the fact that the lack of safety in school transport has become a very important consideration for most parents, IRTE decided to address this very delicate yet overlooked issue that touches the lives of thousands of school children daily.

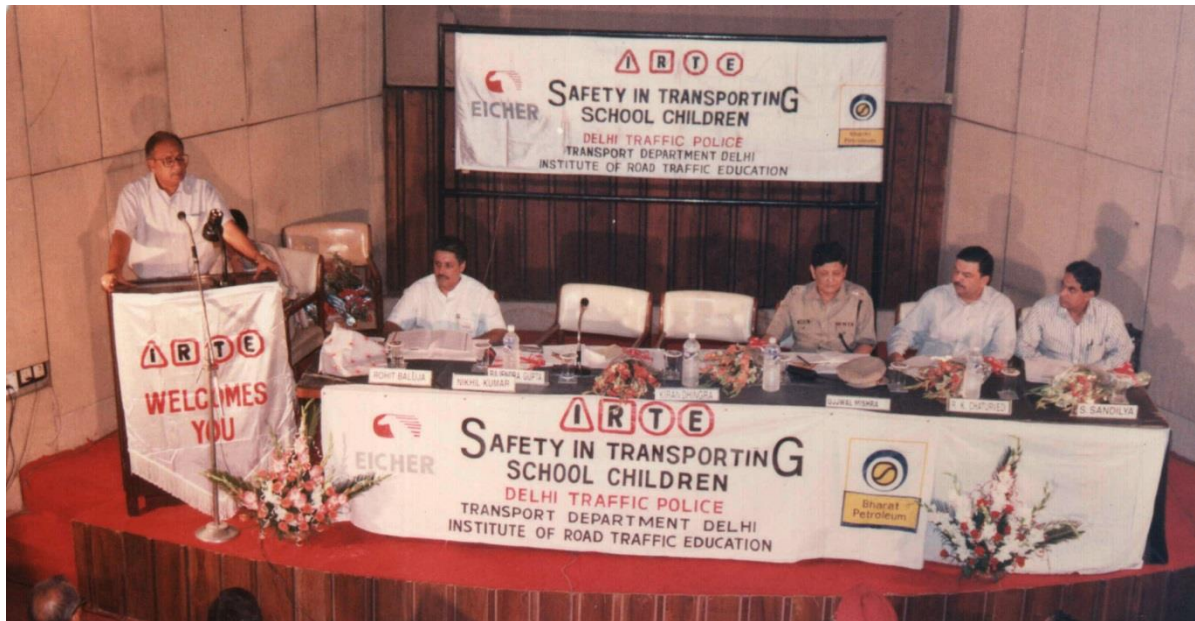


As a first step, Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE) organised a workshop to examine all aspects of School Transport Safety. The workshop on Safety in Transporting School Children was organised by IRTE in coordination with the Delhi Traffic Police and the Transport Department, Delhi in July'95 and sponsored by Bharat Petroleum & Eicher Motors.



The aim of the workshop was to focus on the safety factors involved in transporting school children, and to draw up a broad outline of recommended measures. The workshop focused on the following major issues:

- Problems faced by schools
- Requirement of training
- Roads & Environment
- Enforcement Vehicle Safety & Design



Officials, experts and selected members of the workshop were nominated to form a Steering Committee which met over ten sessions convened by IRTE President, Rohit Baluja over one year elaborated on the recommendations emerging from the workshop. The yearlong effort by IRTE in coordination with Delhi Traffic Police and Delhi Transport Department culminated in the form of a book, 'The Recommended Policy on Safety in Transporting School Children' which endeavoured to channelize the follow-up of the workshop. This document has been most useful to the Transport Departments and Schools across the country in formulating policies.



Subsequent to this, IRTE decided to focus on the most vulnerable means of transportation of schoolchildren auto rickshaws and cycle rickshaws. The School children transported in overloaded auto rickshaws and cycle-rickshaws are not safe and are subjected to very high accident risk. In 1995, IRTE took the first step towards initiating a discussion on this important subject by organising a workshop - 'Safety in Transporting School Children in Auto rickshaws and Cycle-rickshaws'.

The workshop aimed at discussing the reasons which are leading us to subject our children to this high risk, viz.,

- Socio-economic conditions
- Non availability of safe transport facilities
- Convenience
- Non awareness of the dangers posed
- Lack of enforcement powers with the Police
- Political interference



The Workshop was organised by the Institute of Road Traffic Education in conjunction with the Delhi Traffic Police and sponsored by Eicher Motors Ltd. A special booklet as a background paper has been prepared for the workshop highlighting the problem and suggestion for solution. In addition, a short film was prepared to show the potential dangers in misusing these two modes of transportation, screened on the occasion.

In both these workshops, the participants included. representatives from schools (principals, teachers, parents and students), Delhi Transport Corporation, State Transport Authorities, Traffic Police, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, bus operators, representatives from Eicher Motors, Bharat Petroleum etc. Experts from transport research organisations like IIT, SPA, CRRI, RITES, IRC etc. also took part in the workshop.

