

National Conference: The Pedestrian

September 28, 2001

Although walking relates to each member of the population and is the most fundamental form of movement, still it gets the minimum attention and care in transport planning, road design and traffic management in India. The other motorized and even non-motorised road users do not consider it necessary to view the pedestrian as an equal road user. Even the Motor Vehicles Act does not cover the rights, responsibilities and duties of the pedestrian thereby making the pedestrian the most vulnerable among the road users.

Realizing the same, Institute of Road Traffic Education decided to organize an exclusive one day National Conference on Pedestrian to discuss the hazards confronted by the pedestrians and arrive at measures to alleviate the difficulties encountered by them. It was perhaps for the first time in India that a forum of such magnitude was initiated to address the needs of the pedestrian.

The conference was held on September 28, 2001 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The conference was amongst the first of a series of efforts initiated by IRTE to highlight the apathy on this issue. This Conference was conducted in coordination with Road Safety Programme Implementation Committee and supported by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India.

IRTE received 44 technical papers related to pedestrian safety from across the country from different institutes, engineering colleges, police, scientists, journalists etc. 35 of these papers were selected to be included in the commemorative Conference Journal.

A short 7 minutes film on the vulnerability of pedestrian, specially made for this occasion, was also released during the course of the Conference. The Conference was divided into four sessions, namely,

- Engineering Design and Provision of Pedestrian Facilities
- Pedestrian Behaviour, Education and Enforcement
- Special Groups as Pedestrian
- Policies & Planning for Pedestrians

Experts in their respective fields presented technical papers related to pedestrian safety. The range of subjects covered included safety of school children, aged, disabled, infrastructure & design development policies and the need to initiate public awareness.

Each session was chaired & co-chaired by eminent persons from relevant fields such as Mr. Maxwell Pereira, Joint Commissioner of Police, Delhi; Padmashree Dr. Shyama Chona, Principal, Delhi Public School; Dr. P.S. Pasricha, IPS, State Intelligence Department, Maharashtra & Chairman Road Safety Programme Implementation Committee; Mr. G. Sharan, Secretary Indian Roads Congress; Prof. A.K. Sharma, Head, Department of Transport Planning, SPA etc.

The Conference was well attended by delegates who included engineers, police personnel, transport consultants, teachers, social workers, students, journalists etc.

Recommendations emerging out of the deliberations during each technical session were presented during the valedictory session which was presided over by Mr. K.R. Bhati, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India.