

Technical Cooperation on Road Traffic Safety Sector in Vietnam

- Introduction of Traffic Safety Culture Development -

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1. Introduction

The road infrastructure development in the developing countries by ODA has contributed significantly to supporting economic growth of those countries. On the other hand, the road traffic accident fatality rate in these countries has kept increasing correlating a rapid motorization. For instance, as the number of registered motorcycles increased the fatality rate by motorcycle accidents in Vietnam has also increased after 1990's. Corresponding to this situation, the desirable road safety environment improvement (i.e., engineering improvement) and enforcement by Vietnamese traffic police agency had implemented. The comprehensive traffic safety measures based upon 3-E approach (i.e., Engineering, Enforcement and Education) are the key mechanisms in reduction of road traffic accident usage. Utilizing a single measure like traffic safety education is not always sufficient and efficient compared to the other 2-E measures or vice versa. This paper presents the situation of road traffic accidents and the traffic safety measures in Vietnam. Particularly, this paper focuses on utilizing the comprehensive road traffic safety measures of 3-E approach together with introduced practical and educational activities for traffic safety culture (TSC) development.

2. Road Traffic Accident in Vietnam

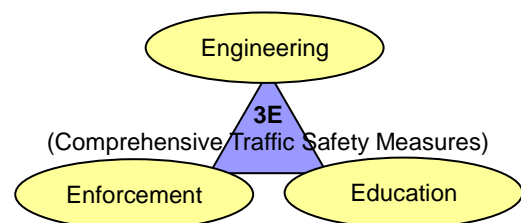
In 2006, there were 14,727 road traffic accidents, 12,757 fatalities and 11,288 injuries in Vietnam¹. The road traffic accidents increased rapidly from 1990 to 2002, which were the peak years of accidents, with an annual increase rate of 13.5%. During this 12-year period, the number of fatalities has particularly increased 5.8 times. Rates of accidents and injuries were increasing until 2002, but decreased later by less than 2 per 10,000 persons. However, fatality rate was still considerably high at about 1.5 per 10,000 persons.

Causes of the traffic accidents are intricately-intertwined between physical situation of road environment, mixed traffic and human errors. Many traffic accidents have occurred on the main national highways particularly in the major urban areas and its conurbations. Approximately 70% of the total number of fatalities was motorcycle users and the major accident causations are human errors such as over speeding and reckless overtaking² which more than halves of the total number of victims are under 30 years old.

3. 3-E Approach

In responding to the severe road traffic accident situation, the comprehensive road traffic safety measures of the 3-E approach (road engineering, traffic enforcement and traffic safety education) have been implementing in Vietnam, see Figure.1. One example was a model project in Chua Boc - Tay Son intersection, the project of Traffic Safety Human Resource Development in Hanoi (TRAHUD) supported by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Although these measures are the mainstay of road traffic safety improvement, it appears that local people still have little understanding toward its importance as they presume it is the task of the government. Hence, the Vietnamese road users still have primitive behavior while driving/using the road spaces.

Figure.1 3-E Approach for Road Traffic Safety



Keywords: Road Traffic Safety, 3-E approach, Traffic Safety Culture Development

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4. Existing Issues on Traffic Safety Education Sector

Most of the accident causations were related to the lack of awareness or ignore traffic laws by road users. These ignorant behaviors are naturally absorbed into daily routine and it is difficult to make behavioral change even they understand knowledge of traffic safety. It is vital important that people should learn proper road using behavior corresponding to motorized society resulting from rapid economic growth. Accordingly, in order to promote effective measures on traffic safety education sector, methodologies of persuasive communication (= education + information + public relations campaign) and direct community-based approach (workshop & training for public participation activities) that can change the road users' awareness came to be discussed to entail the development of traffic safety culture. "Traffic Safety Culture" (TSC) was proposed as a concept to realize "Kindhearted traffic accident free society" that is a principle of traffic safety policy under national road traffic safety master plan until 2020, conducted by National Traffic Safety Committee (NTSC) under cooperation of JICA which are expected to introduce to the whole country.

5. Pilot Project for TSC Development

The pilot project in Hai Duong Province was implemented as one of TSC activities focusing traffic safety education on pedestrians and bicyclists along national highway No.5. Likewise, the TRAHUD project in Hanoi, introduced safety patrol activity at intersections by having local volunteers instructed proper behavior to both violating pedestrians and motorcyclists. These activities were implemented in cooperation with local community and related agencies which is a common practice. There are a variety of activity styles in TSC that can be implementing dependent upon objective and local characteristic. In order to change improper road user behaviors and to raise traffic safety awareness, cooperation and actions among related agencies and community participation are indispensable elements. Most importantly, these activities must be conducting consecutively so that people can be habituated to the right behavior corresponding to motorized society.

Figure.2 Pilot Project for TSC



Activity at Intersection
in Hanoi City

Activity on High School
in Hai Duong Prov.

The daily practice of proper road using behavior would accumulatively internalize an individual attitude, develop into subjective norm and safety-conscious leading to a safe habituation and gradually develop into a sense of social conscience and naturally and heritably transform to traffic safety culture." Traffic accident free society can be established by cooperation and participation of all parties concerned and thus, this is a goal that NTSC is pursuing to achieve so called a traffic safety culture development in Vietnam with cooperation of JICA.

6. Conclusion

The word of "Traffic Safety Culture" seems to lead consideration that "we make it" rather than "foreigner's making it" Any technical cooperation that promotes sustainability will be required together with that of road infrastructure development. Now, Vietnam is coming up against period of traffic war that Japan experienced in 1970's, so it is rationally to say that the comprehensive traffic safety measures will be indispensable. Knowledge and experience of Japanese experts can contribute to economic growth and creation of safety society in Vietnam.

Bibliography

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