

THIRTEENTH KERALA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**COMMITTEE
ON
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
(2011-2014)**

FORTY SECOND REPORT

(Presented on 28th January, 2014)



SECRETARIAT OF THE KERALA LEGISLATURE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
2014

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On

**Paragraphs relating to Transport, Home, Public Works and Health and
Family Welfare Departments contained in the Report of the
Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year
ended 31st March, 2009 (Civil)**

347/2014.

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INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Committee on Public Accounts, having been authorised by the Committee to present this Report on their behalf, present the Forty Second Report on paragraphs related to Transport, Home, Public Works and Health and Family Welfare Departments contained in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31st March, 2009 (Civil).

The Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31st March, 2009 (Civil) was laid on the Table of the House on 1st March, 2010.

The Report was considered and finalised by the Committee at the meeting held on 22nd January, 2014.

The Committee place on record their appreciation of the assistance rendered to them by the Accountant General (Audit) in the examination of the Audit Report.

Thiruvananthapuram,
28th January, 2014.

DR. T. M. THOMAS ISAAC,
Chairman,
Committee on Public Accounts.

REPORT

TRANSPORT, HOME, PUBLIC WORKS AND HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENTS

AUDIT PARAGRAPH

Road Safety Management in Kerala

Highlights

Road accidents and their adverse impact on the public are areas of serious concern for the Government. Kerala, with three per cent of the national population, accounted for nine per cent of the total number of road accidents in the country. There were 37211 road accidents in the State in 2008, involving loss of 3826 lives. The Kerala Road Safety Authority was constituted in April 2007 to co-ordinate road safety activities and to formulate a road safety policy. A Road Safety Fund was also created for this purpose. Though various departments and agencies were involved in this area, no specific road safety policy had been formulated in the State as of August 2009. The major areas of concern highlighted in the review are as under:

The Government did not make proper efforts for co-ordination among the various committees involved with road safety activities.

The strength of enforcement officials in Transport and Police Departments was not revised to be commensurate with the increase in the number of motor vehicles registered during 2003-08. This resulted in poor enforcement of the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act and Rules leading to increase in road accidents.

Out of 635 cases reported by the police during 2004-09 for suspension of driving licences, action was taken in 329 cases. Of this, in 48 cases, suspension of driving licences was not effective as the suspension orders were issued with retrospective effect.

Out of 11 Speed Check Radars purchased by the Police Department, six were not used due to defects, resulting in idle investment of ₹ 34.94 lakh.

Fifteen hospitals located near the National Highways and major district roads in the selected districts referred 3326 major accident cases to the Medical College Hospitals and other major hospitals during the period from January 2007 to May 2009 which indicated that the emergency care facilities available for road accident cases were inadequate.

As of March 2009, 1.37 lakh cases of motor accident claims were pending in Motor Accident Claims Tribunals.

No data management systems on accidents existed in the Public Works, Motor Vehicles and Police Departments.

Introduction

Road safety is an area of serious concern for the State Government. Kerala, with three per cent* of the national population (2001 Census), accounted for nine per cent† of the total road accidents in the country. Road accidents have severe economic and social costs, which are around three per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) annually. The number of road accidents decreased from 41219 in 2004 to 37211 in 2008, whereas the number of deaths showed an increasing trend from 3059 in 2004 to 3826 in 2008. During 2004 to 2008, there was one death for every 12 accidents.

Departments and Agencies involved

The following agencies of the State are involved in the management of road safety:

Transport Department

- *Motor Vehicles Department (MVD)*: This department is responsible for implementation of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 (Central Rules) and the Kerala Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 (State Rules). The Transport Commissioner is the head of the department. There are 18 Regional Transport Offices headed by Regional Transport Officers (RTO) and 42 Sub Regional Transport Offices headed by Joint Regional Transport Officers (Jt. RTO). The RTOs and Jt. RTOs are assisted by Motor Vehicle Inspectors (MVI) and Assistant Motor Vehicle Inspectors (AMVI).
- *Kerala Road Safety Authority (KRSA)*: This was constituted in April 2007 for co-ordinating the activities of various departments towards road safety and to make recommendations to the Government for formulating a road safety policy. A Road Safety Fund was also created and placed at the disposal of KRSA.

Home Department

- *Police Department—Traffic Police*: This department is responsible for control of traffic, enforcement of traffic rules and investigations of traffic

* Economic Review—Government of Kerala, 2007.

† Report of GOI, MORTH Publication on Road Accidents in India, 2005.

accidents and traffic offences. It functions under the various Commissioners/District Superintendents of Police of the State. Nine traffic police stations have been set-up in the State for effective management of traffic. Though a separate post of Inspector General (Traffic) was created by the Government in January 2009 and the duties and responsibilities were also clearly defined, no separate manpower and funds were provided and the pay and allowances of the traffic personnel were being drawn from the funds provided to the Police Department.

In addition, the Public Works Department (PWD), and various Municipal Corporations are associated with the construction and maintenance of roads. The Health Department provides trauma care facilities to accident victims and the Education Department helps to create road safety awareness among students. Besides, the National Transportation Planning and Research Centre (NATPAC)* undertakes research, training and consultancy projects in the transport sector. Motor Accident Claims Tribunals (MACT) deal with claims for compensation in accident cases.

Audit Objectives

The objectives of the performance audit were to assess whether:

- The relevant rules and regulations relating to road safety are effectively and efficiently enforced and action is taken to create awareness about road safety;
- The prescribed standards and specifications are observed in road construction and maintenance;
- A proper system exists for data collection and analysis and the data is used for future planning; and
- An effective system exists for timely action for rescue/transfer of accident victims to hospitals.

Audit Criteria

The following criteria were adopted for assessing the performance:

- Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and rules made thereunder,
- Manuals, codes, departmental orders and instructions,
- Road Safety Authority Act,
- Indian Roads Congress Specifications,

* A Research and Development Centre under the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment.

- Highway Protection Act,
- Road Policy of Kerala State (January 2006),
- Orders issued by the Ministry of Health/Director of Health Services.

Scope and Methodology of Audit

The performance audit was conducted during the period April to June 2009 by test check of the records in the offices of the KRSA, the Transport Commissioner, Director General of Police, State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB), Director of Health Services (DHS) and Chief Engineers, PWD (Roads and Bridges/National Highway Division) and subordinate offices under these, in the four* (out of 14) districts selected by Probability Proportional to Size With Replacement Sampling method. Besides, records relating to road safety programmes of NATPAC, activities of the three† (out of five) Municipal Corporations, motor accident claims and compensation awarded by MACT, road safety awareness programmes by the Director of Public Instructions (DPI) and the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) were also test-checked.

An entry conference was conducted in May 2009 with the Secretary, Transport Department, the Transport Commissioner, the IG of Police (Traffic) and the Additional Secretary, PWD. The audit objectives were explained to them. The findings and recommendations were discussed in detail in the exit conference held in August 2009. The views of the Government/Departments have also been taken into consideration for finalising the performance audit report.

Audit Findings

Performance audit of Road Safety Management in Kerala was conducted under two broad categories, viz. preventive safety and accident care. Under preventive safety category, road infrastructure, the system of enforcement of traffic rules and road safety awareness were examined in detail. Under accident care, rescue operations including transportation of accident victims to hospitals, facilities available in roadside hospitals, payment of compensation for accident victims, etc., were examined. Besides, the monitoring mechanism adopted for road safety management was also examined in Audit.

PREVENTIVE SAFETY

In order to ensure road safety, vehicle movement should be controlled by means of a proper road network, smooth traffic flow, traffic lights and

* Ernakulam, Kozhikode, Pathanamthitta and Thiruvananthapuram.

† Kochi, Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram.

road signages, coupled with a substantial level of compliance to rules by the road users. Audit examination of the factors influencing the accidents revealed the following:

Multiplicity of authorities formed by the Government

Government constituted the following authorities for road safety management:

- A Road Safety Council (RSC) and District Road Safety Committees under it were constituted (December 1991) as per Section 215 of the Motor Vehicles Act with the Minister for Transport and the District Collectors as the Chairpersons of the State Council and District Committees respectively.
- The Kerala Road Safety Authority (KRSA) was established in April 2007 for the implementation of road safety programmes in the State. The Minister for Transport is the Chairman and the Transport Commissioner is the ex-officio Road Safety Commissioner and Chief Executive of KRSA.
- A Co-ordination Committee for Accident Reduction Plan (CCARP) with the Chief Secretary as Chairman was constituted (July 2007) to implement, enforce and co-ordinate accident reduction activities and monitor strict enforcement of traffic laws and rules.

Audit observed that all these authorities had the same members and discussed the same issues during their meetings. Their recommendations such as providing medians, identifying of black spots, establishing emergency care facilities, co-ordinating in digging of roads, enforcing motor vehicle rules, creating awareness, etc. were discussed repeatedly at the meetings but were not implemented by the departments concerned due to financial constraints or manpower shortage. Thus the Government's initiative of creating multiple entities did not produce the desired results towards improving road safety in the State.

Driving standards of drivers

Analysis of the records of accidents with the State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) showed that the reason for 97 per cent of road accidents was drivers' mistakes while mechanical faults, bad roads and faults of pedestrians accounted for less than one per cent each. This indicated poor driving standards and ineffective enforcement of statutory provisions for issuing driving licences and penalising traffic violators.

An integrated approach to drivers' training, testing and licensing is important to prevent 'road rage', over-speeding, dangerous overtaking, lane cutting, jumping of signals, erratic parking, drunken driving, etc. Novices and young drivers, between the ages of 18 and 24 years, were involved in 31 per cent and 34 per cent of accidents during the years 2006 and 2007 respectively, killing 2028 persons and injuring 32897 persons during those two years.

Lacunae in issuance of Licences

A learner's driving licence is issued to a person who is above 18 years of age, physically fit and qualifies in the learner's examination conducted by the Transport Department (TD). The practical test for the permanent driving licence is conducted by the MVI/AMVI. The number of licences issued during 2004-05 to 2008-09 was around three lakh per year. The maximum number of candidates to be tested on a day was fixed at 40 by the Transport Commissioner in May 1997. However, Audit found that during 2008-09 in RTO, Thiruvananthapuram, the number of candidates who took driving tests were in the range of 41 and 68 per day on 157 days. The increase in the number of candidates was likely to affect proper evaluation of the driving skills which would, in turn, lead to issue of licences to persons with inadequate driving skills.

Violation of building rules in providing parking spaces

The Kerala Municipality Building Rules, 1999, prescribe the parking areas* required for different categories of buildings. Moreover, as per the Road Policy of Kerala, parking restrictions on streets and roadsides should be strictly enforced. As the vehicle population increased to 44.42 lakh in 2008, the requirement of parking areas specified in the rules became inadequate because more than one business entity was operating in office and commercial buildings. As parking space in commercial buildings was based on carpet area rather than on foot-falls, most of the vehicles had to be parked on public roads, which led to traffic congestion.

The commercial entities submit to local bodies building plans for construction of buildings showing adequate space for parking of vehicles. Subsequently, these parking spaces were utilised for business activities leading to parking of vehicles on roads and cause traffic congestion. The local bodies did not have any effective control to prevent such illegal practices. The Corporation of Thiruvananthapuram did not maintain proper records of such violations. In a test check, it was noticed that the designated parking spaces in two[†] commercial buildings had been converted for commercial use. Though the Corporation issued

* One Parking space for every 100 Sq. M. of carpet area in business or office buildings (Group E) and 75 Sq. M. of carpet area in mercantile or commercial buildings (Group F).

† Food World at Pattom and Spencer building at Statue in Thiruvananthapuram City.

(June 2007) a notice to the Manager of these buildings for causing traffic congestion and accidents due to lack of parking space, no action had been taken so far (June 2009).

Violation of Parking Rules

For enforcement of parking regulations in Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram, the traffic police introduced a system of fixing stickers on vehicles that were parked in 'No Parking' areas and on vehicles which caused inconvenience to road users. The owners of the vehicles on which the stickers had been pasted were to report to the concerned police stations within 15 days to remit a fine of ₹ 100 for the traffic violation.

Review of records maintained in the traffic police stations revealed that there was no system to ensure that fines were paid in respect of all the cases booked by the police. Action was also not initiated to prosecute the owners who failed to remit the fines due to difficulties in getting addresses from the website of TD. Moreover, records of the booked cases were not properly maintained and the entries were not linked to the serial numbers of the counterfoils. As a result, it could not be verified whether all the cases booked for violation of traffic rules had been registered. Thus the system of enforcement of parking regulations remained ineffective.

Non-functioning of Signals

During the period 2004-09, KELTRON* installed 62 signal lights at a cost of ₹ 3.89 crore in 10 districts. Of these, 12 signal lights installed during 2004-05 were not functioning as of May 2009. It was noticed in audit that in Thrissur District (which stood at third place in the order of occurrence of accidents), eight out of the nine signal lights were not functioning (some of them from January/February 2008 onwards) as the concerned authorities had not given annual maintenance contracts to KELTRON.

It was observed that the Signal Division of KELTRON at the request (March 2007) of the Transport Commissioner had submitted (March 2008) a project report identifying 278 critical junctions in 12 districts that required automatic traffic enforcement. No action had been taken by the Commissioner on the project report so far. The Government accepted the audit observation and stated that the cost of installing signals was high and action would be taken to instal signals through local bodies.

* Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation Limited.

Inadequate signage for speed restriction

In order to facilitate accident-free flow of traffic, signboards on roads should be visible and self-explanatory. As per Section 112 of the Motor Vehicles Act, no person should drive a motor vehicle in any public place at a speed exceeding the maximum speed or below the minimum speed fixed for the vehicle.

During 2006 and 2007, 5279 accidents occurred near schools/colleges in which 443 persons were killed and 6221 persons were injured. Government decided (December 2008) to put up traffic signboards showing speed limits in front of all schools in the State with the help of the PWD, the Revenue Department, Local Self Government Institutions and Parent Teachers Associations of schools. Although, there were 12333 schools in the State, the Police Department had installed signboards only in front of 810 schools. The details of installation of signboards from Local Self Government Institutions and from other departments such as PWD and Revenue were awaited (October 2009).

Audit found that during 2006 and 2007, 27 out of 261 accidents and six out of 142 accidents respectively, turned out to be fatal where speed-breakers were installed. Had there been proper signage, these accidents could have been avoided. Further, on the National Highways and State Highways, signboards prescribing the speed limits for driving were not placed.

In order to restrict overspeeding, Government ordered (March 2007) all RTOs to ensure that speed governors were fitted in stage carriages and heavy transport vehicles before 15th April, 2009. Only 89908 out of 4.99 lakh heavy vehicles had been fitted with speed governors as of 14th July, 2009.

It was also noticed in the test-checked districts that the signboards placed by the police prominently showed advertisements of sponsors rather than the traffic information. Moreover, these signboards were not maintained as per the colour codes and standards prescribed by the Indian Roads Congress.

Manpower status

While the number of motor vehicles registered and the number of driving licence holders during 2003-08 showed an increase of 59 per cent and 26 per cent respectively, the number of enforcement officers in TD remained stagnant at 409.

There was no well-defined system in the Police Department for assessing the manpower requirement for traffic management. Scientific norms for deployment of staff had neither been laid down nor evolved on the basis of

work study. The department was functioning with a sanctioned strength of 2156 personnel. The DGP intimated (August 2009) that only 2135 personnel were in position as at the end of 2008-09 against the requirement of 5637.

Audit observed that the inadequacy in the strength of enforcement officers in both the departments and the manifold increase in the vehicle population could contribute to poor enforcement of the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act and the Rules leading to higher rate of road accidents. The Transport Commissioner stated (August 2009) that lack of equipment, training and space for seized vehicles in addition to the shortage of manpower had adversely affected enforcement.

Non-imposition of deterrent penalties on habitual offenders

In order to book habitual traffic offenders, the Motor Vehicles Act and State Rules specified a lesser penalty for offences committed for the first time and increased penalty for violation of the same provision on subsequent occasions. However, the Police or the TD did not have any integrated system to verify whether drivers had been booked under the same rules of the Act on an earlier occasion so that increased penalty could be imposed on the offences committed again. Every time, when a violation was noticed, the drivers were booked as if it was for the first time and they got away with lesser penalty. Thus the objective of the Act remained unachieved. Similarly, compounding of violations was also not recorded in the licences to prevent habitual offences.

Suspension of driving licences for over speeding and other serious violations

The Motor Vehicles Act envisaged different kinds of penalties for violation of different provisions. Over speeding of vehicles was a major cause of road accidents and proper enforcement of speed restrictions could bring down the number of accidents. As per instructions issued by the Transport Commissioner in June 2002 and March 2008, driving licences were to be suspended for a minimum period of three months and six months in cases of over speeding and drunken driving respectively. Though monthly reports on action taken on the suspension or cancellation of driving licences were to be submitted by the field offices to the Commissioner, they were not furnished. Accepting this point, the Commissioner stated (August 2009) that introduction of smart card licences would solve the problems.

The Police Department was also reporting cases of violation of Rules to the concerned RTOs for suspension of driving licences. Out of 635 cases reported by the police during 2004-09 in the four districts test-checked, driving licences was suspended in 302 cases, fines were imposed in 27 cases while in the remaining

306 cases no action was taken. Audit found that in 140 out of 302 cases, driving licences were suspended for periods ranging from three to six months with retrospective effect. As a result, in 48 cases, the suspensions did not have any impact on the violators. In respect of 162 cases, the delays in suspension of driving licences were up to 34 months. The TD did not intimate the Police Department regarding the action taken on the cases reported by them.

When a driving licence is seized by the police to effect suspension or cancellation for rule violations, a temporary authorization is issued to the driver under Rule 26 of the State Rules. The holder of this authorization is not entitled to drive a motor vehicle beyond the period specified therein. However, in all the 306 cases test-checked in RTO, Thiruvananthapuram, the period of expiry of the temporary authorization was not recorded. Thus, in the absence of any expiry period for the temporary authorization, the violators continued to drive the vehicles posing threats to other road users. No action was taken by TD to suspend or cancel the driving licences also.

Deficiency in enforcement due to shortage/defective equipment

The Human Rights Commission suggested (April 2002) that every district should be provided with one Speed Check Radar per 10000 vehicles and one breath analyser for every 10000 driving licences issued. However, the police and TD together had one Speed Check Radar for every 80917 vehicles and one breath analyser for every 19848 driving licences issued. Information received from selected districts revealed that police officials on traffic duty were not supplied with the required numbers of equipment.

Mention was made in Paragraph 3.5.13 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31st March, 2006 (Civil) about extra expenditure incurred on purchase of 11 Speed Check Radar Guns during 2004-05. The Radar Guns were distributed to various police stations during April 2005 but remained unpacked till training was organised by the supplier in September 2006. During training, many of the equipment were found to be defective and the supplier was not ready to repair the same on the plea that the warranty periods had already expired. Out of the 11 Speed Check Radars, six radars costing ₹ 34.94 lakh were never used due to defects in the equipment, which resulted in wasteful expenditure. The Transport Commissioner, in response, stated (August 2009) that the radars were not giving accurate data and therefore better equipment was needed.

Lack of enforcement on drunken driving

As per Section 185 of the Motor Vehicles Act, if a driver has 30 mg. of alcohol content in 100 ml. of his blood while driving or attempting to drive a

motor vehicle he is committing an offence. As per data made available to Audit, 42994 cases of drunken driving were detected by police during the period 2006 and 2007, whereas only in 743 cases (less than 2 per cent) the causes of accidents were reported to be drunken driving.

Superintendent of Police, Thiruvananthapuram (Rural) received 20 breath analysers during the period November 2001 to August 2008 from police headquarters and distributed 10 of them to five Circle Inspectors. It was reported by the Superintendent of Police, Thiruvananthapuram (Rural) that four out of the ten breath analysers distributed were not functioning. During the period 2004 to 2009, only 29 cases were detected by utilising the breath analysers.

Under the 'Modernising Government Programme'*, the Police Department invited (July 2005) tenders for purchase of 83 breath analysers. Out of the four tenders received, the price per piece (₹ 3,796) quoted by M/s K.C. Services, Chennai was the lowest for their model EDKCA. The technical evaluation committee opined that the model EDKCA offered by M/s K.C. Services was of no use and was only a showpiece. In spite of this, the department purchased 79 breath analysers of the EDKCA model for Rupees Three lakh. Subsequently, the department found that the instruments were of inferior quality and the results were erratic. This resulted in infructuous expenditure of Rupees Three lakh.

Thus, the supply of inferior quality breath analysers to the enforcement personnel rendered detection of drunken driving largely ineffective.

Erection of arches and hoardings causing threat to road safety

The Kerala State Human Rights Commission directed (April 2008) the District Collectors to issue necessary orders banning erection of arches in public places. Erection of arches in public places, especially on busy roads and placing of hoardings on the roadsides obstructed the view of drivers, diverted their attention and cause accidents. It was found that 879 accidents in 2006 and 3025 accidents in 2007 took place due to diversion of attention of drivers. The number of persons killed in these accidents was 51 and 205 and those injured were 1318 and 4452 respectively. The District Collector, Thiruvananthapuram issued orders in March 2009 banning erection of arches on public roads. However, it was noticed that the erection of arches continued (June 2009).

Short utilisation of Road Safety Fund

As stated earlier the Kerala Road Safety Fund (Fund) was to be set-up as per the Kerala Road Safety Authority Act. However, the Kerala Road Safety

* The State Government's Programme to overhaul and improve its services to the people.

Fund Rules (Rules) were notified only in December 2007, after a delay of nine months. Under the Rules, one time cess collected from vehicle owners and 50 per cent of the compounding fees collected during the previous year was to be transferred to the Fund every year. As at the end of March 2009, the Fund had a corpus of ₹ 24.41 crore. Due to delay in issue of Rules, only ₹ 38.75 lakh could be spent from the fund towards road safety activities and the balance of ₹ 24.02 crore remained unutilised (June 2009).

Lack of co-ordination in creating awareness

Road policy approved by State Government in January 2006 envisaged the starting of awareness programmes among the public regarding road safety through the KRSA and other organisations. It was observed that:

- The Police Department and TD were conducting road safety weeks once in a year. During this week, TD was also imparting awareness training to drivers, students, teachers and the general public. These programmes were however, not continued after the completion of the road safety week, which rendered them ineffective.
- The Kerala State Road Safety Council decided (November 2000) to include road safety aspects in the State's school syllabus from the primary level. However, the subject was included in the text books of Classes 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 only during 2009. The Director, SCERT stated (May 2009) that directions were issued to include road safety aspects in the text books of Classes 9 and 10.
- KRSA decided in December 2008 to establish Road Safety Clubs in all schools in the State. However, such clubs were started only in 57 out of 3943 schools in the selected four districts as of 31st March, 2009. Moreover, there was no uniformity and co-ordination in the activities of the Road Safety Clubs. In response to this, the IG (Traffic) stated (August 2009) that action was being taken to create more clubs.
- CCARP decided (August 2007) to give wide publicity on road safety by telecasting one-minute visual media programmes through Kerala State Transport Project and the Police Department. However, the programmes had not been prepared for telecast (June 2009).

Thus, the task of creating road safety awareness among the public had not been taken up in a systematic and planned manner by any agency so far. Moreover, different agencies were conducting awareness programmes independently without co-ordination. This could result in ineffective campaigning

against the hazards of drunken driving, not wearing helmets/seat belts, using mobile phones while driving, improper lane driving habits, disobeying traffic signals, etc.

Delays in road restoration works

The Thiruvananthapuram District Public Utility Co-ordination Committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of the District Collector for granting permission to various agencies seeking permission for digging of roads. However, there was no system to ensure that the cut roads were restored without delay. In the cases of works arranged by the Roads Division of PWD, Thiruvananthapuram, delays up to 23 months were noticed in 106 out of 228 road restoration works. Considering the delays in completion of restoration works, the Government issued an order in May 2009 directing the agencies to complete the work of cutting and restoration within 15 days from the date of granting permission for the works, failing which penalty of Rupees One lakh per day would be payable by the concerned agencies. Inordinate delays in restoring road cuts could increase the number of accidents due to overturning and skidding of vehicles in the unrestored portions.

Non-completion of black spot rectification

A junction or reach of a road where more than three major accidents take place in a year is identified as a 'black spot'. The responsibility for identification and rectification of black spots rests with the PWD. As per the recommendations of the Co-ordination Committee for Accident Reduction Plan, black spots are to be identified and rectified regularly. As of May 2008, PWD had identified 321 black spots in the 14 districts of the State. Of these, 137 black spots were rectified at a total cost of ₹ 10.81 crore while the balance of 184 (57 per cent) black spots had not been rectified till May 2008.

Audit also found that the list of black spots kept with the PWD was not exhaustive as it did not include black spots identified by the Police Department. The PWD had no system to collect details regarding black spots from other departments. In response to Audit, the Transport Commissioner stated (August 2009) that the total number of black spots identified by TD were 896 and corrective action was being taken in this regard. PWD agreed (August 2009) to collect and include the information from other departments in their list.

[Audit Paragraph 1.3.1 to 1.3.6 contained in the Report of Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31st March, 2009 (Civil)].

Notes furnished by Government on the above audit Para is included as Appendix II of this Report.

The Committee found that the members in respect of Road Safety Council, District Road Safety Committee and Road Safety Authority were one and the same and were discussing similar issues during their meetings. The Transport Commissioner stated that Road Safety Authority would meet once in 6 months and recently they had held a discussion with the officials of the Public Works, Police and other departments regarding road safety. To a query of the Committee, the Transport Commissioner stated that the department had wound up the Co-ordination Committee for Accident Reduction Plan (CARP). Meanwhile the Joint Transport Commissioner brought to the notice of the Committee that Road Safety Council and Road Safety Authority were two Statutory authorities having different composition where Road Safety Council constituted as per the Motor Vehicles Act was an Advisory Committee and Road Safety Authority was an empowered Committee, constituted as per the Road Safety Authority Act.

2. The Committee enquired whether the present trend in the percentage of accidents was accelerated or not. The Joint Transport Commissioner replied that from 2007 onwards the number of accidents were decreasing but the number of death due to accidents were increasing. The Committee opined that compared to other States, Kerala has the highest number of road accidents and subsequent deaths.

3. The Inspector General (Head quarters) informed that number of death due to accidents was increased to 4320 from 3900, but the number of accidents showed a declining trend. The Principal Secretary, Home Department explained that the number of accidents was substantially decreased in Cherthala-Thrissur sector where four lane roads existed. But it was drastically increased in Chengannur-Venjaramoodu sector of M.C. road. He opined that due to better condition of roads in the latter sector, vehicles were moving at very high speed caused more accidents when compared to the four lane sector. He also submitted that the Government should think of four lane roads while going ahead with road development.

4. The Joint Transport Commissioner stated that in Chengannur Sector the roads were poorly designed with no pedestrian passage or crossing facility and blunt bye-road crossing which resulted in the increase in number of accidents.

5. The Committee then opined that the only database of accident details available with the department was the one available with State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) which showed a declining trend. In this regard the Joint Transport Commissioner added that at present 100 cameras had been installed across the State. Also speed check radars and speed detection system had been installed. He also informed that the entire state would be covered with cameras

within 6 months, which would considerably reduce the speed of vehicles and thereby occurrence of accidents. He also reminded the Committee that by installing cameras, the number of accidents was considerably reduced in the Cherthala-Thrissur four lane sector and in the districts of Thrissur, Palakkad and Alappuzha the occurrence of accidents was comparatively high as the vehicles move around at very high speed due to the absence of speed detection cameras.

6. To the query of the Committee regarding speed norms for four lane and two lane roads, the Joint Transport Commissioner stated that it was different for each road and in the case of four lane roads, the speed limits was 80 km./hr. whereas, the speed limit was 70 km./hr. for KSTP roads. Intervening the discussion the Chief Engineer (Projects) brought to the notice of the Committee that in the case of M.C. Road, the permitted speed limit was 65 km./hr., but vehicles were passing there at a speed of 100 km./hr. The Transport Commissioner deposed that by installing cameras, occurrence of accidents could have been reduced and if any violation of Rules detected, penalties should be strictly imposed on the offenders. He continued that about 7 lakh new vehicles were being registered every year and necessary changes should have to be made in the structural design of the roads to curtail road accidents. The Committee then opined that road accidents could be reduced only if the condition of roads were improved.

7. The Committee was anxious on the non-functioning of the driver's training centre at Edappal and enquired when the work was started. The Transport Commissioner replied that the work was started during 2004 and delay occurred due to paucity of funds. He added that the site was handed over during 2008 and the work was assigned to CPWD. Delay also occurred in the preparation of plan and estimate and in clearing the land by cutting the trees. He added that at present 80% of the work had been completed and within 3 to 4 months, the same would start functioning. The Committee expressed its concern over the dragging of the work of the training centre at Edappal.

8. The Committee remarked that the number of accidents were considerably reduced in four lane roads and in the case of two lane roads without dividers it increased steadily due to over speed. Then the Committee urged the Home Department to furnish a report detailing the present trend in the declining of road accidents and the reason thereof at the earliest.

9. Based on the audit paragraph which mentioned about lacunae in issuance of license, the Committee asked whether the department had deployed more than one team at a test centre for evaluating driving skills. The Transport Commissioner stated that in places having more candidates, more than one team

were deployed. He added that together with the 40 fresh candidates, the appearance of failed candidates for driving license enhanced the total number of candidates.

10. The Committee wanted the department to enforce strict restriction towards the number of candidates appearing for driving test on each day or deploy more officials for conducting practical tests. When the Transport Commissioner apprised the Committee that the department had shortage of manpower, the Committee observed that though 144 new posts were created in the department recently, most of them belongs to clerical cadre. So the Committee decided to recommend that a scientific study regarding the required technical staff should be conducted in the Transport Department and accordingly necessary steps should be taken to appoint sufficient staff qualified for conducting practical tests.

11. The Committee viewed the violation of building rules in providing parking space, as a serious issue and enquired about the action taken by the department in this regard. The Additional Secretary, Thiruvananthapuram Corporation informed that a special committee was constituted in 2009 comprising Principal Secretary, LSGD, Town Planning Officer, Engineer and Officials as its members, with the intention to detect violation of building rules and also a special squad was formed to find the violation in building rules. The Additional Secretary, Thiruvananthapuram Corporation submitted that in Thiruvananthapuram City 45 cases were so far detected by the special squad and 4 cases were detected in the previous month. The Committee was surprised on hearing this and opined that it was so miserable that nowhere building rules were seemed to be followed and the department could detect only 4 cases in a month. The Additional Secretary, Thiruvananthapuram Corporation then stated that most of the buildings were constructed ten to fifteen years back and so no records were available.

12. The Committee blamed this indifferent attitude of the department and enquired about the action taken by the department towards two commercial buildings mentioned in the audit para. The Additional Secretary, Thiruvananthapuram Corporation answered that in the case of the building at Spencer Junction, parking space was not provided yet and in the case of building at Pattom, the basement floor was converted to parking area. The Committee then opined that in the case of building at Spencer Junction it was a clear violation of building rules and vehicles were parked thereon road sides.

13. The Additional Secretary, Thiruvananthapuram Corporation informed that if any complaint regarding parking space/violation of building rules was

received, it would be inspected on the very day itself and daily inspection would also be conducted. The Committee then expressed its dismay towards the fact that the only thing done by the squad was issuing notice rather than taking action.

14. The Committee urged the Local Self Government Department to furnish a detailed month-wise report in respect of each Corporations in the State regarding the number of inspections conducted after 2009, number of violations detected, number of cases where parking space was converted as commercial space and the action taken in the case of parking space etc. within a month.

15. Regarding the violation of parking rules, the Director General of Police stated that according to Motor Vehicles Act the police constables and Head constables deputed for traffic duties had no enforcement power. Hence they fix stickers on vehicles which violated parking rules and then vehicle owners should report to the concerned police station within 15 days to remit a fine for the violation of rule. The Committee opined that such violations of parking rules should be marked and for repeated violation major punishment like suspension of driving licenses should be imposed. If the punishment is strictly imposed, the violation could be reduced considerably. The Principal Secretary, Home Department informed that if more cameras were installed then all traffic violations could be detected and that could be used as a clear proof for effecting penalties.

16. The Director General of Police disowned the opinion to suspend driving license in the case of ordinary traffic violations. He added that in the case of major accidents, involving loss of life, the Police Department would automatically recommend for the suspension of license and further action was done by the licensing authority.

17. The Committee put forth an opinion that licenses of drivers who were violating the traffic rules for ten times should be suspended or cancelled.

18. The Committee then asked whether the department had any database regarding traffic violations. The DGP answered that it could be done through Website and added that there was a proposal for the introduction of point system in the Motor Vehicles Act through which penalties like temporary suspension, cancellation of license etc. could have been imposed.

19. The Committee viewed with serious concern over the increasing tendency of the containers and trucks parking on the right side of four lane roads rather than on left side creating traffic problems. The Principal Secretary, Home Department admitted the findings of the Committee and remarked that training should be given to the truck drivers for this.

20. The Committee wanted the department to formulate an integrated database for detecting cumulative individual violations and decided to recommend that necessary changes should be brought to the statutes so that the department could impose penalty for cumulative violation. The Committee remarked that the drivers of KSRTC had no individual responsibility in the case of accident claims and at present compensation towards accident claims were met from the account of KSRTC. The Committee analysed that competition for collection bata, unscientific running time etc., would also cause accidents. The Committee urged the Transport Department to impart training to drivers at regular intervals and to conduct a detailed study into the working of KSRTC and rearrange the schedules more scientifically.

21. Regarding the audit para which highlighted the non-functioning of signals the Transport Commissioner stated that the signal lights were installed by KELTRON and its maintenance was done by the local authorities. To the query of the Committee regarding Annual Maintenance Contract, the Transport Commissioner stated that the same has been expired. He added that Road Safety Authority had no mechanism to renew it and the concerned department should manage it on a permanent basis. He added that usually signal lights were installed by various authorities like panchayats, local bodies, Transport Department, etc. and recently these signal lights were being installed ensuring a warranty period of 3 years including Annual Maintenance Contract. The Transport Commissioner submitted that in Kerala it was installed by KELTRON and nobody was vested with the responsibility for its maintenance. Therefore a system should be formulated for entrusting someone for the further maintenance of signal lights.

22. While the Committee enquired the number of signal lights functioning at present, the Transport Commissioner stated that the department did not have any data regarding this. While the Committee pointed out the need for a centralized data, the DGP stated that the District Collectors were entrusted for collecting such data in each and every district. The Committee stressed the necessity of synchronization of signal lights and urged the Transport Department that timing of signal lights should be ensued while installing and must be in accordance with the IRC specification.

23. The Committee decided to recommend that the Road Safety Authority should undertake a comprehensive review regarding the requirement and functioning of signals and should formulate certain norms for its effective functioning.

24. While examining the audit objection regarding inadequate signage for speed restriction, the Committee found that in M.C. Road there was no sign boards specifying humps. The Secretary, PWD stated that now in KSTP roads signboards had been installed in all places. The Chief Engineer (Projects), PWD informed that Thiruvananthapuram-Adoor stretch of M.C. road was declared as "model road" under a World Bank Scheme and a working group was constituted to watch that stretch and to make it as a zero accident zone. She continued that in this zone advance signals and reflectors were also installed.

25. The Committee suggested that a delineator should be installed in Wayanad pass in order to avoid accidents since there would be heavy fog during winter and monsoon seasons. The Chief Engineer (Projects), Public Works Department deposed that the Road Safety Authority had prepared an estimate for the same and assured to install it at the earliest.

26. While the Committee pointed out the AG's observation that the signboards were not maintained as per the colour codes and standards prescribed by the Indian Roads Congress and the signboards prominently showed advertisement of sponsors rather than the traffic information, the Chief Engineer (Projects), PWD stated that usually signboards were installed by various agencies for highlighting their advertisements and if signboards were installed exclusively by Government departments such situation could have been avoided. She also emphasized the need for a co-ordination between various departments in this aspect since the departments like Home, LSGD etc. were also have the right to install signage in PWD roads. The Secretary, PWD supplemented that local bodies leased the right to install signboards to private agencies as it being a source of income. Then the Chief Engineer (Projects), PWD remarked that the profit incurred from advertisements was negligible when compared to the accidents caused due to them. The Secretary, PWD informed that the consent of local bodies would require for excluding private agencies from erecting signboards in PWD roads.

27. The Committee opined that the Public Works Department should take necessary steps to discourage the practice of fixing flex boards on the roads and hoisting flags on the dividers. The Committee also suggested that the advertisements exhibited through signboards should not be highlighted.

28. The Secretary, PWD apprised the Committee that regarding the unauthorised erection of hoardings and flags in traffic islands, the Chief Minister had sent Demi Official letters to the leaders of political parties based on the discussion of a meeting of the Road Safety Authority. The Chief Engineer (Projects), PWD opined that the erection of large hoardings outside the barriers of roads distracting the attention of drivers was also not advisable.

29. The Committee concluded that the signage in public roads should be installed in accordance with the norms of Indian Roads Congress. The Committee also decided to recommend that regarding the unauthorised erection of hoardings and flexes in traffic islands, the Chief Minister should hold a discussion with the leaders of all political parties for framing strict laws.

30. While going through the audit para regarding the manpower status, the DGP stated that even though homeguards were deployed for traffic control, the enforcement power was vested with Transport Department. The Joint Transport Commissioner stated that the Transport Department was conducting campaign model enforcement in two-three places and as a result accidents had been considerably reduced in those regions.

31. To a query of the Committee, the Joint Transport Commissioner stated that Transport Department had only 400 enforcement officers for 70 lakh vehicles. The DGP informed that 90% of the traffic control was done by Home Department and to meet with the requirement, a proposal for the appointment of more homeguards was submitted to Government. Then the Committee decided to recommend that the Home Department should be provided with more home guards, and special allowance like risk allowance should be given to them since their wages being minimal when compared to their duty.

32. Regarding the audit objection, the Committee decided to recommend that the Home department should prepare a database regarding traffic violations.

33. Regarding the audit para, the DGP admitted the fault occurred on the part of the department in purchasing and installing the speed check radars in 2004-05 and enquiry in this regard was going on. On a query of the Committee about the number of speed check radars now available with the department, the witness, the Principal Secretary, Home Department stated that none of the units purchased at that time was functioning. He added that certain drawbacks happened on the part of the department while purchasing the units. Moreover the firm had not provided proper training before installation and therefore certain units were non-functional on account of the defects that occurred in the installation stage itself. But as no follow-up had been conducted after the purchase, the defective ones were not repaired within the warranty period. Intervening the discussion, the DGP stated that these were all happened during the initial stages of installation. Now 300 speed check radars were functional.

34. The Committee enquired the action taken against the officials who were responsible for the purchase of inferior quality of 83 breath analysers against the recommendation of the Purchase Committee. The witness, the DGP replied that enquiries would be conducted in this regard. Then the Committee

decided to recommend that the department should take action against those responsible for the purchase of inferior quality breath analysers.

35. The Committee observed that Road Safety Authority had no accountability and enquired about the non-utilization of the Road Safety Funds and the person who audited the accounts and its pendency. The Transport Commissioner stated that the rules provide that one time cess would be collected from vehicle owners and 50 per cent of the compounding fees collected during the previous year was to be transferred to the fund every year. He added that ₹ 24 crore received as first instalment and ₹ 24 crore received during 2008-09 had been completely utilized but in the subsequent years only ₹ 15 crore had been allotted since the amount was credited in the consolidated fund.

36. While the Committee enquired about the cumulative balance as of 31st March, 2011, the Transport Commissioner stated that it accrues to more than ₹ 90 crore. The Committee then enquired the reasons for the non-utilization of ₹ 24 crore at the time of audit. Without giving answer to the question, the Joint Transport Commissioner stated that the department had received ₹ 69 crore towards Road Safety Fund, of this ₹ 62 crore had been distributed and the balance amount was ₹ 7 crore. The Committee decided to recommend that the provisions in the rules regarding fund transfer should be strictly complied with.

37. To the query of the Committee regarding audit, the Joint Transport Commissioner stated that the Road Safety Fund was not endured to any statutory audit till date and auditing by Chartered Accountant was completed which was forwarded to Government after approval.

38. The Committee urged the department to submit the accounts for audit by the Accountant General at the earliest and directed that the accounts of Road Safety Authority should be audited every year by a suitable officer, for the strict enforcement of the accountability of the Authority. The Committee decided to recommend that Government should allot the balance amount pending to be given to Road Safety Authority at the earliest.

39. The Committee enquired the steps taken by the department in creating awareness regarding road safety. The Transport Commissioner stated that they had sent a detailed action plan to every RTO's and funds were allotted towards it. In addition to this every driving schools were given training in this aspect.

40. To the query of the Committee regarding the number of drivers who got counseling through Counseling centres, the Joint Transport Commissioner stated that training had been imparted to 7000 drivers at present. In addition to this, fund was allotted to every districts for the same. He added that special

training was given to the drivers of tipper lorries, as more complaints were received against them.

41. Further, the Committee found that the road restoration works were delayed due to lack of co-ordination between various agencies in Government; like K.S.E.B., K.W.A. etc. The witness, Secretary, Public Works Department, admitted the Committee's observations and informed that all District Collectors were given strict instructions to convene the Road Safety Council meeting regularly. He added that usually action plan would be submitted in the initial months of an year, which was not complied with. Now at Piravom, a newly constructed Road was dug. For its restoration, about ₹ 12 crore was required but the allotted amount was only ₹ 1.9 crore.

42. The Committee opined that the cut roads should be restored without delay. The Committee decided to recommend that the Chief Secretary would review the functioning of the Co-ordination Committee and should take appropriate action.

43. Regarding non-completion of black spot rectification, the Secretary, Public Works Department stated that the department had identified 216 black spots, of which, rectification of 50 black spots had been completed. He added that the Road Safety Council had allotted sufficient fund for the rectification of the remaining black spots and the work would be completed within 6 months.

Conclusion/Recommendation

44. The Committee feels pity on the quality of the drivers in our State. It remarks that, Kerala has higher rate of road accidents compared to other states and it is mainly due to rash driving.

45. The Committee understands that, the number of road accidents are steadily increasing due to the poor structural design of roads. It recommends to take remedial action to improve the condition of roads and to curtail road accidents.

46. The Committee notes that the number of road accidents are less in 4 lane sector whereas in 2 lane sectors without any dividers accidents are increasing steadily. It recommends that while designing road it would be four lane roads with proper pedestrian passage, road dividers, zebra lines etc.

47. It directs the Transport Department to take necessary steps to install speed detection cameras at reasonable distances throughout the state. The Committee notes with dismay that construction of driver's training

Centre at Edappal is progressing at a very low pace and urges the Transport Department to complete the work of that centre at the earliest.

48. The Committee urges the Home Department to prepare and furnish a detailed report regarding the present trend of road accidents and the reasons thereof to the Committee.

49. The Committee recommends to conduct a scientific study regarding the number of technical staffs to be appointed in the Transport Department and directs to appoint sufficient staff qualified for conducting practical tests for driving license and also to provide required staff as per study report.

50. Towards the audit objection regarding violation of building rules in providing parking spaces, the Committee sarcastically comments that building rules are nowhere seems to be followed and the department could detect only four cases in a month. More ridiculous is the case that even if violations detected, the squad perform their duties simply by issuing notices rather than taking any action.

51. The Committee urges the Local Self Government Department to furnish a detailed report in respect of each Corporation regarding the number of inspections made for detecting violation of building rules regarding parking spaces after 2009, number of violations detected, number of cases where parking space is converted as commercial space and action taken in this regard within a month.

52. The Committee is very much concerned about the wrong parking of containers and trucks on the right side of the roads creating traffic problems. The Committee urges the Transport Department to impart training to drivers especially of tippers, trucks etc. at regular intervals.

53. The Committee directs the Transport Department to formulate an integrated database for detecting cumulative individual violations of traffic rules and recommends to make necessary changes in the statute enabling imposition of penalties like temporary suspension, cancellation of licence etc. for such violations.

54. The Committee remarks that a large number of accidents were caused by KSRTC buses and in case of accidental claims, compensation would be met from the corpus fund of KSRTC. It directs the Transport Department to make necessary amendments in the rules providing the person causing accidents shall also be equally responsible for paying compensation in case of accidental claims involving vehicles of KSRTC

rather than bearing it solely by the Corporation. It also suggests a scientific study into the working of KSRTC and to rearrange the schedule accordingly.

55. The Committee was informed that in our State signal lights are installed by KELTRON and nobody cares about its maintenance. The department has no database regarding signal lights. The Committee recommends that the synchronisation and timing of signal lights should be ensured at the time of installation itself and in accordance with the IRC specification. The Committee recommends that Road Safety Authority should conduct a comprehensive review regarding the requirement and functioning of signals.

56. The Committee also recommends to install a delineator in the Wayanad pass in order to avoid accidents in Winter and Monsoon Season.

57. The Committee recommends the Transport Department to ensure that neither boards are fixed nor flags are hoisted on the roads and dividers. The Committee directs the department to install signage as per the norms of Indian Roads Congress. It also suggests the practice of erecting huge hoardings and highlighting advertisements in the signboards distracting the attention of drivers outside the barriers of roads should be discouraged. It also urges the Transport Department to install signboards indicating humps in MC Road.

58. Regarding manpower status, the Committee recommends that more homeguards should be posted in Home Department so that their service could be utilised for traffic control. It also suggests that special allowance like risk allowance be given to those who are posted for traffic duty as their wages being minimum when compared to their duty.

59. The Committee also points out the need for the preparation of a database regarding traffic violations. The Committee then reiterates with the audit finding that the department had purchased inferior quality breath analyser, against the suggestion of the purchase Committee and suggests that the Transport Department should take stringent action against those responsible.

60. Regarding the short utilisation of Road Safety Fund, the Committee observes the amount owes to the fund as per rules was not being transferred in time. Delay in transferring of fund resulted in non-utilization of fund. So it recommends that the provisions in the rules regarding fund transfer should be complied strictly in a time bound manner.

61. **The Committee also recommends the Government to allot the pending amount due to Road Safety Authority at the earliest. It also suggests to formulate steps to audit the accounts of Road Safety Authority every year by a competent officer for ensuring the accountability. The account so audited should be subjected to audit by the Accountant General. Necessary amendments should be made in the Act in this regard.**

62. **The Committee opines that the road restoration works are delayed due to lack of co-ordination among various agencies like K.S.E.B., K.W.A. etc. Hence it stresses that the Chief Secretary would review the functioning of the Co-ordination Committee and should take appropriate action in this regard.**

AUDIT PARAGRAPH

Accident Care

Incomplete accident information

The State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) is the main source of accident information in the State and no other department maintains a comprehensive information system for collecting and compiling road safety parameters and accident-related data for further analysis by different departments such as PWD, Police and Motor Vehicles.

Audit observed that accident data maintained by SCRB did not represent the true picture of accidents in the State as it contained data taken only from the FIR registered on the accidents. The following accident types were not captured in the system:

- Minor accidents where only General Diary (GD) entries were captured by the police stations,
- Accidents settled between the parties without GD entry or FIR, but police was informed or was aware of the accident,
- Accidents where the police were not informed initially by either parties but were later informed through witnesses or the local community,
- Unknown accidents where no one reported to the police, and
- Antecedents of the victims and violators involved in accidents for criminal investigation to bring out motives of sabotage.

Thus effective monitoring and planning for accident reduction was not possible. In response to Audit, the IG (Traffic) stated (August 2009) that the cases entered in the general diary were only minor in nature.

Geographical Kerala Accident Management System

With a view to supporting the development of road safety and traffic enforcement programmes of the PWD and the Police Department, K.S.T.P. purchased (2004) a software viz., the 'Geographical Kerala Accident Management System (GeoKAMS)' at a cost of ₹ 18.50 lakh from M/s IBS Technologies. The Police Department installed the software at Thiruvananthapuram City Traffic Police Station and decided (July 2006) to install the same in 57 MGP* Police Stations also. The system was meant for storing details of road accidents captured in the police stations in the main server and to make available to the enforcement agencies and other stakeholders, the required information for planning and implementation of the road safety accident reduction plan. The following points were noticed in audit:

- Though it was decided to install the software in 57 MGP police stations, it was installed only in 44 MGP police stations and three city traffic stations. Three lakh accident report forms printed and distributed to these police stations were not used in all the police stations. In some cases where these forms were used, the data was incomplete.
- GeoKAMS was developed as a 'Desktop Software' which required separate installation in each computer and essentially functioned as a stand-alone unit and was located in different locations throughout the State without any connectivity. Thus, sharing of data with other stakeholders was not effective.
- When these deficiencies were pointed out by the Chief Engineer, PWD (R&B and IT), the IGP stated (September 2008) that the Police Department was not keen to implement the present GeoKAMS system because of a lot of technical flaws. He had requested (July 2008) the Secretary, PWD for installation of new web-based software on the Road Safety Management System (RSMS) developed by IBS. As the hardware, costing ₹ 9.79 lakh, purchased in May 2007, meant for GeoKAMS were not used, the IGP ordered (October 2008) to reallocate the same to the Forensic Science Lab (FSL), the Cyber Cell and SCRB.

* Modernising Government Programme.

Thus, the purchase and installation of the software did not serve the intended purpose and the expenditure of ₹ 18.50 lakh incurred thereon became wasteful. This was primarily due to lack of a proper system development procedure adopted by K.S.T.P. before procuring the computer.

Ineffective emergency response and trauma care

Emergencies due to road accidents require a co-ordinated response from various departments such as Police, Medical and Fire and Rescue Services.

More than 50 per cent of all accident mortality takes place within the first hour of occurrence of the accident viz. the 'golden hour'. According to the recommendations (October 2007), of the CCARP, a policy on emergency management services and accidents was to be initiated by the Department of Health and Family Welfare. In spite of this, the Government did not provide emergency management services in the hospitals. Trauma resulting from road accidents remained the most common cause of death among people who died at less than 35 years of age.

Fifteen hospitals located near the National Highways and Major District Roads in the selected districts referred 3326 major accident cases to the Medical College Hospitals and other major hospitals during the period from January 2007 to May 2009 which indicated that the emergency care facilities available for road accident cases were inadequate. Due to the lack of equipment for diagnosis and surgical treatment, accident victims did not get critical care during the 'golden hour' that could have saved their lives.

Based on a decision (June 2002) of the Road Safety Council to strengthen emergency management in health services, the Director of Health Services submitted a proposal for establishing 20 Primary, 22 Secondary and 4 Tertiary level trauma care units in the District Hospitals, Taluk Hospitals and Primary Health Centres. A detailed Implementation Plan for an estimated cost of ₹ 35.52 crore was also submitted to the Government in December 2004. However, no decision was taken by Government on this (September 2009).

Government of India had sanctioned (2004-2007) grant-in-aid of ₹ 5.91 crore to four hospitals* for capacity building for upgradation and strengthening of emergency facilities. The amount was for purchase of well-equipped

* Medical College, Kottayam, Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram, District Hospital, Palakkad and Taluk Headquarters Hospital, Neyyattinkara.

ambulances and other essential equipment required for accident and trauma care services. The status of implementation of the projects was as follows:

STATUS OF UPGRADATION AND STRENGTHENING OF EMERGENCY FACILITIES

<i>Name of Hospital</i>	<i>Amount sanctioned</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Year of Sanction</i>	<i>Stage of implementation</i>
	<i>(Rupees in lakh)</i>			
Medical College, Kottayam	146.25	127.42	2005-06	Furnishing of the building not completed. Equipment costing ₹ 73.96 lakh was purchased. Trauma Care Ward has been functioning near casualty as a temporary measure.
Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram	144.86	97.49	2004-05	₹ 36.94 lakh was spent on civil and electrical work but the building was not being utilised as a Trauma Care Centre. Equipment costing ₹ 60.55 lakh had been purchased and was being used in different departments.
District Hospital, Palakkad	150.00	46.19	2006-07	Civil works not completed
Taluk Headquarters Hospital, Neyyattinkara	150.00	45.07	2006-07	Civil works not completed

Source: Information received from the Director of Medical Education and the Director of Health Services.

Though funds were released during 2004-07, emergency facilities in the above hospitals had not been upgraded and strengthened (September 2009).

National Highway Accident Relief Service Scheme

Under the National Highway Accident Relief Service Scheme, the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways allotted six ambulances and six cranes to the Transport Commissioner, Kerala in December 2004 and February 2005 which were distributed to six NGOs based on selection criteria approved by

the GOI. Of these, one crane (₹ 19.81 lakh) allotted to Abhaya Charitable Society, Kollam was seized (September 2006) by MVD for unauthorised use and handed over to police. The crane was still in police custody (July 2009). In March 2005, GOI requested the Transport Commissioners of all States to send requirements of cranes and ambulances for rescue operation from two NGOs from each State. Accordingly, the Transport Commissioner, Kerala forwarded (June 2005), an application for cranes and an ambulance received from the Association for Welfare of the Handicapped, Kozhikode. Even though the ambulance costing ₹ 8.60 lakh was allotted in 2007, it had not been registered in the name of the Transport Commissioner and put to use (June 2009) as the invoice was in the name of the NGO.

Motor Accident Claims

As per Section 140 of the Motor Vehicles Act, the owner of any vehicle involved in an accident has to make payment of compensation for the death or permanent disablement of any person resulting from that accident and to ensure payment of compensation against third party risk. No person should use a motor vehicle unless a policy of insurance is in force for the vehicle. The Act further provides that claims for compensation should be disposed of as expeditiously as possible.

The table below indicates the number of motor accident claim petitions filed, the number of claims disposed of and the number of claims pending during the five-year ending 31st March, 2009.

POSITION IN DISPOSAL OF CASES BY MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL (MACT)

Year	Number of MACT Cases			
	Opening balance	Filed	Disposed	Closing balance
2004-05	151107	56008	47024	160091
2005-06	160091	52096	54275	157912
2006-07	157912	48112	52597	153427
2007-08	153427	43710	53860	143277
2008-09	143277	41662	48034	136905

Source: Data from Kerala High Court

During the period from 2006 to 2009, clearances by the Tribunals were more than the filing of claims, bringing down the number of pending claims from 1.58 lakh to 1.37 lakh. At the current disposal rate another three years would be required for clearance of 1.37 lakh claims.

MONITORING**Lack of a proper system for monitoring and co-ordination**

Section 135 of the Motor Vehicles Act, envisages that the State Government may make one or more schemes to provide for an in-depth study on the causes and analyses of motor vehicle accidents with the approval of the State Legislature. No such schemes had been formulated till June 2009. As per the existing practice, the accident data were collected only from FIRs. No in-depth studies on the causes of accidents were conducted either by the TD or by the NATPAC and no corrective measures taken periodically.

As per the Road Policy, 2006 issued by the Government, a system approach was to be adopted in data collection, compilation and updation for analysis using the comprehensive system. However, it was noticed that there was no data management system relating to accident-related parameters in the Public Works, Transport or Police Departments. The Chief Engineer (Roads and Bridges) did not have a system to compile information on black spots, road cutting, restoration, etc., for monitoring the work on a regular basis. Similarly, lack of an integrated licensing and enforcement database for both Police and TD resulted in ineffective planning, co-ordination and monitoring by other agencies involved in road safety related activities.

Further, recommendations of the committees constituted by the State Government for co-ordinating road safety activities were not effectively implemented because these issues were not pursued by conducting meetings regularly.

Lack of control over driving schools

The Transport Commissioner directed (February 2004) all RTOs to inspect at least one driving school in a month and Joint RTOs to inspect all driving schools once in six months and report on their functioning. Audit observed that the inspections were not conducted by the concerned RTOs/Joint RTOs as prescribed. This indicated lack of proper control over the functioning of the driving schools. The Commissioner stated (August 2009) that shortage of manpower was the main reason for not conducting regular inspections of the driving schools.

Conclusion

Government did not make concerted efforts to co-ordinate the activities of the various committees involved in road safety activities. Shortage of enforcement officers and lack of equipment and training diluted the enforcement of rules and regulations. There was no mechanism to identify habitual offenders of traffic rules and to impose penalties. Road safety awareness programmes lacked sufficient planning. Delays in road restoration works increased the risk of road accidents. GeoKAMS, the software for supporting road safety and traffic enforcement programmes did not serve the intended purpose. Emergency care services in the State were poor. Motor Accidents Claims Tribunals had the burden of clearing 1.37 lakh cases pending as at the end of March 2009.

Recommendations

- Government should review the multiplicity of committees in the field of road safety and the Kerala Road Safety Authority should be given adequate financial and executive powers for ensuring proper co-ordination between the various concerned agencies.
- Enforcement of the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act and Rules should be strengthened by deploying sufficient and dedicated manpower in the Transport and the Police Departments.
- A centralised database of accident details should be created by State Crime Records Bureau and the Transport Department with a provision for sharing the data among the other regulating agencies.
- Government should frame a trauma care policy and create facilities for emergency management.
- A common hotline facility should be provided to the Transport Department and the Police Department to receive information on road rage, over speeding, other violations, occurrence of accidents, etc. from the public and the hotline number should be displayed prominently on the rear side of all public transport vehicles.

The above points were referred to Government in September 2009. Reply had not been received (October 2009).

[Audit Paragraph 1.3.7 to 1.3.10 contained in the Report of Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the financial year ended 31st March, 2009 (Civil).]

Notes furnished by Government on the above audit Para is included as Appendix II of this Report.

63. Towards the audit objection, the Principal Secretary, Home Department, stated that usually records regarding accidents were prepared by State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) on the basis of First Information Report. He added that the audit objection was that cases entered in the General Diary and that settled between the parties were not included in the total crime statistics. The witness submitted his view point that it was impractical to include every accident information in the criminal statistics as it would create a distorted image to our State. The Committee accepted the explanation put forth by the Secretary.

64. Regarding the wasteful expenditure towards purchase of Geographical Kerala Accident Management System (GeoKAMS), the Director General of Police stated that the software GeoKAMS was ineffective because it was not web based and it could not be used at the initial stage. The Chief Engineer (Projects) informed that the Public Works Department had developed a software viz., GeoKAMS and handed over the same to the Police Department which in turn collected the data using that software. But now a new Road Safety Management System on Web-basis had been developed which was being functioned effectively.

65. Regarding the audit paragraph towards ineffective emergency response and trauma care, the Director, Medical Education stated that the Government had allotted ₹ 144 lakh for Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram, ₹ 145 lakh for Medical College, Kottayam, ₹ 142 lakh for Medical College, Kozhikode for developing Emergency care facility which had been fully utilised except by Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram. In Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram the allotted amount had been utilised for the construction of a building opposite to casualty for setting up of trauma care management with blood bank facility. She added that as per the opinion of the experts from PMSSY Scheme, that the old building constructed for trauma care was not favourable for the purpose. So it was decided to construct a new building adjacent to casualty where trauma care unit could be established.

66. The Committee then enquired whether the construction of trauma care unit in Palakkad District Hospital and Neyyattinkara had been completed. The Additional Deputy Director of Health Services stated that in Palakkad the Out patient Block was functioning in the ground floor, blood bank in the 1st floor and the construction of operation theatre had also been completed. In the case of Neyyattinkara the construction of trauma care unit had been completed. Equipments, furniture, ambulance, etc., had also been purchased.

67. The Committee then enquired whether major accidents in a district would be reviewed by the Co-ordination Committee. The Joint Transport Commissioner stated that state level review would be conducted regularly but it would not be reviewed at the district level. The Committee suggested that the departments like Health, Police and Fire and Rescue Services should review the major accidents and should also monitor whether appropriate action had been taken after the occurrence of accidents. The Committee also suggested that every department should take adequate steps to shift the injured one to the hospital soon after the occurrence of accidents. The Committee decided to recommend that all accidents occurred in between two meetings of the Co-ordination Committee should be reviewed.

68. Towards the audit objection regarding National Highway Accident Relief Service Scheme, the Transport Commissioner informed that under the National Highway Accident Relief Service Scheme, Government of India had allotted six ambulances and six cranes to Transport Commissioner of Kerala which were distributed to 6 NGO's. He added that some of them were not maintaining/running those vehicles properly and so Government of India had permitted Transport Department to take back the possession of those vehicles. He informed that now the Department had taken back those vehicles and had decided to hand over those vehicles to Police for disaster management.

69. The Committee then asked whether the disaster management team had any system for maintaining the same. The Secretary, Public Works Department stated that they had constituted District Disaster Management Cell headed by the District Collector. A State Level Disaster Management Authority was also functioning for the co-ordination of such works at state level.

70. Regarding the staff pattern deployed for disaster Management, the Secretary, Public Works Department answered that most of the staff were deputed from Revenue Department. The Committee doubted whether the team was provided with modern equipments. The Secretary, Public Works Department informed that the department had allotted ₹ 5 crore to Fire Force for procuring necessary equipments. Meanwhile the Secretary, Home Department stated that the Government had now decided that the equipments procured for the use of Fire Force should be maintained by them instead of keeping it in the Collectorate.

71. The Committee remarked that for effective functioning of disaster management, concerted efforts of various departments like Police, Revenue and Fire and Rescue Services was necessary and Revenue Department should co-ordinate various departments for Disaster Management.

72. Regarding Motor Accident Claims, the Committee enquired whether there was any increase in the number of MACT claims. The Transport

Commissioner stated that department did not have any data regarding this. The Committee urged the Transport Department to furnish a detailed report regarding the number of MACT cases and its present position.

73. Towards the lack of a proper system for monitoring and co-ordination, the Transport Commissioner stated that they would introduce a system for proper monitoring and co-ordination of road safety activities.

74. While examining the audit paragraph regarding lack of control over driving school the Committee enquired the number of driving schools inspected during the previous year. The Joint Transport Commissioner stated that they had inspected all driving schools and license of about 70 schools had been suspended.

75. The Secretary, Public Works Department brought to the notice of the Committee that the road safety could be ensured to a certain extent with the development of four lane traffic. But in some area due to the resistance from people, land acquisition could not be done as envisaged. He continued that under the pressure of certain outer agencies like real estate mafia or terrorist group, who were acting against the interest of our State, some people were resisting all the road development activities. Therefore a political consensus was required in this regard and a strong message should be given to the public on the issue. The Committee viewed this very seriously and urged the Public Works Department to furnish a comprehensive report on the issues faced in land acquisition for the development of four lane traffic in our State at the earliest.

Conclusion/Recommendation

76. Regarding ineffective emergency response and trauma care, the Committee suggests that departments like Health, Police and Fire and Rescue Services should review all the major accidents occurred in the past so that they could identify the lacunae faced by them in each occasion. The Committee directs that the department should take adequate measures to ensure that the injured ones in accidents should be provided with first aid and shifted to hospital within no time of its occurrence. It also recommends that all accidents occurred in between two consecutive meetings of the Co-ordination Committee should be reviewed. The Committee recommends the Government to formulate a trauma care policy at the earliest.

77. The Committee points out that a concerted effort of various departments like Police, Revenue, Fire and Rescue Services etc. is essential for effective disaster management. The Committee also proposes that the Revenue Department should co-ordinate various departments for the same.

78. The Committee urges the Transport Department to furnish a detailed report regarding the number of MACT cases and its present position.

79. **The Committee concludes that with the development of four lane roads, Road Safety could be ensured to a certain extent. But protest from the locals against land acquisition hinders road development works. The Committee opines that it is high time to conduct awareness programme among political parties and inhabitants in this regard. The Committee exhorts the Public Works Department to furnish a comprehensive report regarding the problem in land acquisition, which lie as a main hindrance in the development of four lane roads in our State.**

Thiruvananthapuram,
28th January, 2014.

DR. T. M. THOMAS ISAAC,
Chairman,
Committee on Public Accounts.

APPENDIX I

SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Para No.</i>	<i>Department concerned</i>	<i>Conclusion/Recommendation</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1	44	Transport	The Committee feels pity on the quality of the drivers in our State. It remarks that, Kerala has higher rate of road accidents compared to other states and it is mainly due to rash driving.
2	45	”	The Committee understands that, the number of road accidents are steadily increasing due to the poor structural design of roads. It recommends to take remedial action to improve the condition of roads and to curtail road accidents.
3	46	”	The Committee notes that the number of road accidents are less in 4 lane sector whereas in 2 lane sectors without any dividers accidents are increasing steadily. It recommends that while designing road it would be four lane roads with proper pedestrian passage, road dividers, zebra lines etc.
4	47	”	It directs the Transport Department to take necessary steps to install speed detection cameras at reasonable distances throughout the State. The Committee notes with dismay that construction of Drivers Training Centre at Edappal is progressing at a very low pace and urges the Transport Department to complete the work of that centre at the earliest.
5	48	Home	The Committee urges the Home Department to prepare and furnish a detailed report regarding the present trend of road accidents and the reasons thereof to the Committee.
6	49	Transport	The Committee recommends to conduct a scientific study regarding the number of technical staffs to be appointed in the Transport Department and directs to appoint sufficient

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
			staff qualified for conducting practical tests for driving license and also to provide required staff as per study report.
7	50	Transport	Towards the audit objection regarding violation of building rules in providing parking spaces, the Committee sarcastically comments that building rules are nowhere seems to be followed and the department could detect only 4 cases in a month. More ridiculous is the case that even if violations detected, the squad perform their duties simply by issuing notices rather than taking any action.
8	51	Local Self Government	The Committee urges the LSGD to furnish a detailed report in respect of each Corporation regarding the number of inspections made for detecting violation of building rules regarding parking spaces after 2009, number of violations detected, number of cases where parking space is converted as commercial space and action taken in this regard within a month.
9	52	Transport	The Committee is very much concerned about the wrong parking of containers and trucks in the right side of the roads creating traffic problems. The Committee urges the Transport Department to impart training to drivers especially of tippers, trucks, etc. at regular intervals.
10	53	”	The Committee directs the Transport Department to formulate an integrated database for detecting cumulative individual violations of traffic rules and recommends to make necessary changes in the statute enabling imposition of penalties like temporary suspension, cancellation of licence, etc. for such violations.
11	54	”	The Committee remarks that a large number of accidents were caused by KSRTC buses and in case of accidental claims compensation would be met from the corpus fund of KSRTC. It directs

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
			the Transport Department to make necessary amendments in the rules providing the person causing accidents shall also be equally responsible for paying compensation in case of accidental claims involving vehicles of KSRTC rather than bearing it solely by the Corporation. It also suggests a scientific study into the working of KSRTC and to rearrange the schedule accordingly.
12	55	Transport	The Committee was informed that in our State signal lights are installed by KELTRON and nobody cares about its maintenance. The department has no database regarding signal lights. The Committee recommends that the synchronisation and timing of signal lights should be ensured at the time of installation itself and in accordance with the IRC specification. The Committee recommends that Road Safety Authority should conduct a comprehensive review regarding the requirement and functioning of signals.
13	56	”	The Committee also recommends to install a delineator in the Wayanad pass in order to avoid accidents in Winter and Monsoon Season.
14	57	”	The Committee recommends the Transport Department to ensure that neither boards are fixed nor flags are hoisted on the roads and dividers. The Committee directs the department to install signage as per the norms of Indian Roads Congress. It also suggests the practice of erecting huge hoardings and highlighting advertisements in the signboards distracting the attention of drivers outside the barriers of roads should be discouraged. It also urges the Transport Department to install signboards indicating humps in M.C. Road.
15	58	Home	Regarding manpower status, the Committee recommends that more homeguards should be

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
			posted in Home Department so that their service could be utilised for traffic control. It also suggests that special allowance like risk allowance be given to those who are posted for traffic duty as their wages being minimum when compared to their duty.
16	59	Transport	The Committee also points out the need for the preparation of a database regarding traffic violations. The Committee then reiterates with the audit finding that the department had purchased inferior quality breath analyser, against the suggestion of the Purchase Committee and suggests that the Transport Department should take stringent action against those responsible.
17	60	”	Regarding the short utilisation of Road Safety Fund, the Committee observes the amount owes to the fund as per rules was not being transferred in time. Delay in transferring of fund resulted in non-utilization of fund. So it recommends that the provisions in the rules regarding fund transfer should be complied strictly in a time bound manner.
18	61	”	The Committee also recommends the Government to allot the pending amount due to Road Safety Authority at the earliest. It also suggests to formulate steps to audit the accounts of Road Safety Authority every year by a competent officer for ensuring the accountability. The account so audited should be subjected to audit by the Accountant General. Necessary amendments should be made in the Act in this regard.
19	62	General Administration	The Committee opines that the road restoration works are delayed due to lack of co-ordination among various agencies like K.S.E.B., K.W.A. etc. Hence it stresses that the Chief Secretary would review the functioning of the Co-ordination Committee and should take appropriate action in this regard.

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
20	76	Health, Home and Transport	Regarding ineffective emergency response and trauma care, the Committee suggests that departments like Health, Police, Fire and Rescue Services should review all the major accidents occurred in the past so that they could identify the lacunae faced by them in each occasion. The Committee directs that the department should take adequate measures to ensure that the injured ones in accidents should be provided with first aid and shifted to hospital within no time of its occurrence. It also recommends that all accidents occurred in between two consecutive meetings of the Co-ordination Committee should be reviewed. The Committee recommends the Government to formulate a trauma care policy at the earliest.
21	77	Home, Revenue	The Committee points out that a concerted effort of various departments like Police, Revenue, Fire and Rescue Services, etc. is essential for effective disaster management. The Committee also proposes that the Revenue Department should co-ordinate various departments for the same.
22	78	Transport	The Committee urges the Transport Department to furnish a detailed report regarding the number of MACT cases and its present position.
23	79	Public Works	The Committee concludes that with the development of four lane roads Road Safety could be ensured to a certain extent. But protest from the locals against land acquisition hinders road development works. The Committee opines that it is high time to conduct awareness programme among political parties and inhabitants in this regard. The Committee exhorts the Public Works Department to furnish a comprehensive report regarding the problem in land acquisition, which lie as a main hindrance in the development of four lane roads in our State.