Road Safety Research and Education in Bangladesh

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Road traffic accident deaths in Asia and the Pacific are alarming when compared with the rest of the world. Almost half of the world's 1.3 million road fatalities occur in the Asia-Pacific region and many developing nations like Bangladesh are facing a worsening situation. Significant efforts at research, development and innovations are urgently needed in Bangladesh to deal with critical road safety problems. There are about 12,000 deaths and many more serious injuries each year on roads in Bangladesh. It is the poor that are most vulnerable. Pedestrians, bicycle riders, motorcyclists and those using informal transport including the bus and truck passengers are by far the majority, accounting for over 80 percent. Apart from road user aspects, unlawful behaviour of drivers, vehicle, road and environmental factors are most prevalent. Mixed traffic and the conflicting requirements of different road users are of major concerns. Recent road safety initiatives include the establishment of the Accident Research Institute, Road Safety Strategic Action Plan, initiation of the Road Safety Demonstration Project and training of professionals. In this paper an attempt has been made to present an overview of the present status and organisation of road traffic safety in Bangladesh with a view to learn latest advances and share experiences with safety professionals in the region. In particular, the paper discusses the progresses and barriers in road safety research, education and training programs and highlights the importance of international/regional co-operative support in the exchange of scientific principles, policies, experiences and training of professionals for promoting greater road safety in Bangladesh.