

# Role of Digital Media Literacy in Implementing Traffic Rules in India

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**Abstract:** Ever since the age of civilization man started moving from one place to other. This movement from one place to other is indebted to the invention of wheel. Bullock carts were among the initial modes of transportation in initial stages. Man started domesticating animals in the civilization era. While milch cattle were kept for meeting the milk and other dairy products need, the oxen were kept for ploughing the land for agriculture purposes. Bulls used to pull the carts loaded with different articles required by the then man. Later in the era of kings and emperors, horses used to pull the chariot of Kings, emperors and other prominent people. Horses and elephants were the main animals which were used to attack the enemy during battles. But most of ordinary people used to walk on foot. They would cover long distances on foot only as domesticating bulls and bullocks cart was the property of comparatively well to do families. Poor people, meager farmers and laborers could not afford to keep bullocks or cattle. Times kept on changing and with the changing times the world witnessed a number of changes in every field of life. This article explores the role of digital media literacy in implementing traffic rules in India. It discusses the evolution of transportation, the importance of traffic rules, and the potential of digital media in spreading awareness about these rules. The article concludes by emphasizing the significant role digital media literacy can play in enhancing traffic literacy and reducing road accidents. This article aims to explore the potential of digital media literacy in enhancing the implementation of traffic rules in India, thereby contributing to road safety and reducing accidents.

**Keywords:** Digital Media Literacy, Traffic Rules, Road Safety, Public Awareness, India

## 1. Introduction

Humanity has witnessed great development and growth in the means of transportation. From walking on foot to travelling in aeroplanes, the journey has been commendable. There were times when people used to cover long distances on foot. After that humanity witnessed the arrival the era of bi-cycle which eased the travelling hazards. Those were the days when one had to apply for license for keeping and driving license which used to be issued by local municipality. Industrial revolution in England revolutionized the modes of living and transportation. German inventor Karl von Drais developed the first bicycle in the world in 1817. It was then known as 'Swift walker'. Scottish blacksmith Macmillan invented the first mechanically propelled bicycle in 1839. Bicycle made the journey of man from one place to other more comfortable. After that motorcycle, cars, jeeps, scooters and many other modes of transportation, this made human life very easy. As the modes of earnings increased and new technology brought about Green Revolution the farming community was able to boost its earnings. Industry also grew at its own sluggish pace. With the introduction of tractors in agriculture sector and trucks for cargo purposes, the traffic started increasing. A number of National and State highways were laid to meet with the speedy traffic requirements. As prosperity increased two wheelers like motorcycles and scooters and cars started running on the roads. People started purchasing two wheelers or four wheelers as per their needs and sources of Income. With growing traffic a number of traffic rules and regulations were made with the provision of penalties for the law breakers. Traffic rules and signals came into being. We often see open violation of Traffic rules which leads to accidents and loss of property as well as loss of life. People don't take traffic signals very seriously. They wait at the red light only if they see that a traffic police man is positioned there otherwise they care little about traffic

signals that results in chaos, pandemonium and undue traffic jams. People give scant respect to traffic rules. The infringement of traffic rules results in accidents which at times may prove to be fatal. Traffic rules are not just for drivers, they are in fact for everybody. For example when it is said 'keep to the left' it applies on drivers as well as those who walk on foot.

### Significance of the Study:

This article is significant as it highlights the potential of digital media literacy in enhancing road safety in India. It suggests a novel approach to address the issue of traffic rule violations and road accidents, which is a major concern in the country.

### Research Methodology:

The research methodology used in the study is based on descriptive approach. This includes a description of the data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. Secondary data from various authenticated sources has been collected and analyzed from divergent view points because the topic of study is of great significance as it relates to road safety and open violation of traffic rules all over India. Before discussing the need of traffic rules, let us have a look at traffic signals. Traffic signals are of three kinds:

#### 1) Mandatory traffic Signals:

These are in fact set of signs which are obligatory for drivers. Drivers don't mean professional drivers or truck drivers. A driver is anybody who drives a vehicle. The vehicle may be two-wheeler, three-wheeler or four-wheeler. These signboards are meant for smooth functioning of traffic. Of course, the violation of these signals is punishable. Let us have a glimpse at these mandatory traffic signs and signals:

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bankbazaar.com

<https://www.bajajfinservmarkets.in/insurance/motor-insurance/traffic-rules-signs-and-violations.html#parentHorizontalTab3>

**2) Cautionary Traffic Signals:**

Cautionary traffic signals warn drivers about some potholes, speed breakers and some potential threat ahead. The neglect of such signals may result in accidents in case the drivers don't slow down their vehicle. These signals may be regarding U turn, steep ascent, narrow bridge, pedestrian crossing, school ahead and falling rocks etc. Let us have a look at Cautionary Traffic Signs:



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<https://www.bajajfinservmarkets.in/insurance/motor-insurance/traffic-rules-signs-and-violations.html#parentHorizontalTab3>

**3) Informative Signs**

These signs are aimed at serving as aids or help the drivers about the knowledge of facilities. They guide the drivers to their destination. These signs include hospitals, petrol pump, public telephone, eating places or parking etc. Following is a small list of informative signs:



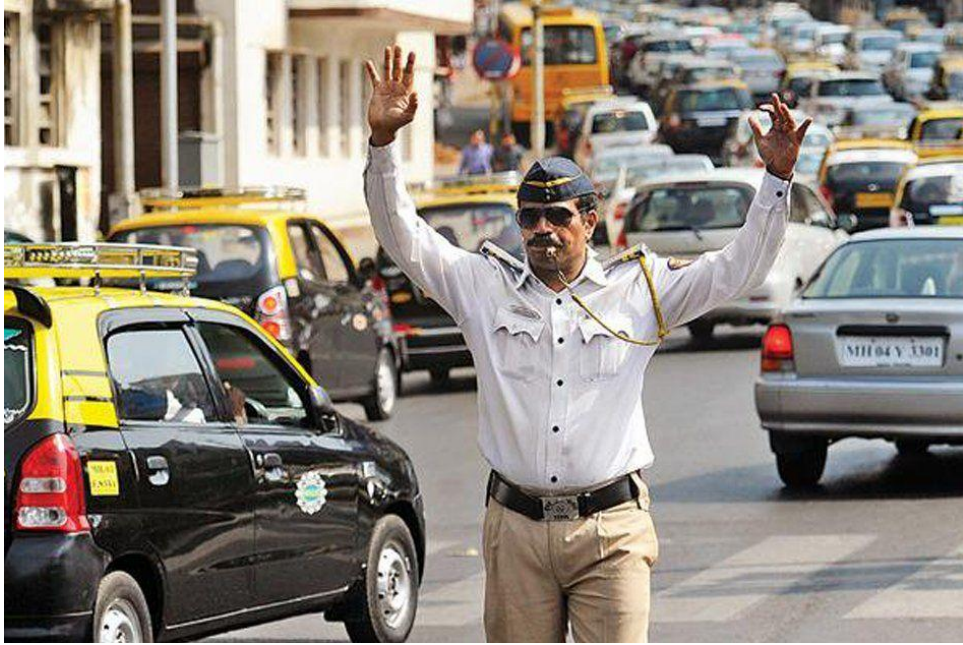
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<https://www.bajajfinservmarkets.in/insurance/motor-insurance/traffic-rules-signs-and-violations.html#parentHorizontalTab3>

### Need of traffic Rules

Rules and regulations are necessary to ensure disciplined and hassle free traffic movement. Such rules help avoiding traffic trespassing and reducing the incidents of accidents. A number of obstacles and dangers may be found on roads. Traffic rules ensure safety of vehicles, goods, drivers and people who travel in these vehicles. Compliance of Safety signals and traffic rules can potentially mitigate the chances of accidents. Traffic signals make journey easy. Mile stones dug at every other kilometer help follow the right path which help reaching the destination without any hick up. It makes travelling much easier. There may be some sharp turns and blind spots on the road. Traffic signals help drivers be cautious of the hindrances and other impediments ahead which may alert them before it if too late. In hilly areas during rainy season and in all the terrains during night driving such signals prove to be very helpful. There may be signals about detours, obstacles, falling rocks and construction zones etc. Traffic signals are needed for road safety and effective and efficient movement of traffic. Traffic signs and red light squares help managing heavy traffic in cities and metropolitans. The knowledge of traffic rules and signals is of utmost importance to the budding and new drivers. It has been witnessed that Driving Licenses are issued without testing the knowledge the applicant about traffic signals and traffic rules. When they start driving on roads they commit silly mistakes which may be life threatening at times. According to a survey about 40%

people, mostly females, don't possess a Driving License. Parents don't prevent their adolescent children driving scooters, motorcycles, cars and even tractors or trucks in crowded urban localities or National or State highways. When these uncertified and unskilled 'drivers' without valid driving license commit mistakes and met with accidents and lose their lives, parents repent at their folly. Over speed is another issue. These days cars run much faster than old ones. Though FOUR or SIX lane roads are being constructed but thousands of new vehicles come on roads every day in India. This leads to traffic congestion but people drive at very high speed. They care little about the boards of speed limits. As a result fatal accidents occur every now and then. The markets are also getting over crowded day by day. The two wheelers and three wheelers in narrow lanes and crowded market places don't let pedestrians walk safely on the road. Sometimes it becomes rather difficult to cross a road on foot. The condition of senior citizens becomes rather pathetic at crowded places where even walking on foot is very difficult; people visit such places on their two wheelers which enhances the chances of traffic jams to say the minimum. Then three wheelers keep moving in these crowded markets which making the problem worse than the worst. This scenario demands the framing of traffic rules and regulations with the provision of stern punishment. Mere framing of such rules is not enough, the law enforcing agencies must keep high vigil on violators and those who defy the rules must be brought to the book.



Source: <https://thelogicalindian.com/news/no-more-cash-transactions-with-the-mumbai-traffic-police/>

One needs to learn the driving skills before actually start driving. Appropriate the Driving license issued by RTO of the concerned district is a prerequisite for driving. Driving without an authenticated Driving License is a punishable crime. One needs to apply for a Driving License at RTO office that issues a Learning License at first. This License is applicable for duration of SIX months from the date of issue for general use and for a period of THREE years for transport vehicles. After the expiry of Learning License one may apply for Light Motor Vehicle License. Before the license is issued there is a provision of Driving Test of the applicant. After passing the Driving Test the RTO office issues Learning License. The same is true about Heavy Vehicle License, Heavy Goods Motor Vehicle and Heavy Passenger Motor Vehicle License. Of course, a number of documents need to be attached with the file for grant of Driving License along with requisite fee which varies from state to state. These Licenses are entailed for ensuring ethical, courteous and well skilled drivers in order to avoid accidents. But unfortunately it is a harsh reality that most of the times the License is issued without any Driving Test. Impersonation also occurs in Driving Tests. It is also a harsh reality that more than 40% drivers don't possess an

authorized and valid Driving License. It leads to more and more incidents of accidents. The DL is issued at the condition that one will follow the traffic rules and regulations.

The importance of traffic rules lies in the fact that millions of a huge variety of vehicles run on Indian roads. There are national highways, State Highways and narrow roads in the way. Then there are millions of two-wheelers in urban areas along with bicycle riders and pedestrians. The safety of each and everyone is of paramount importance. For ensuring this safety drivers must follow the traffic rules as commitment to follow these rules ensures safe driving and greatly reduces the possibility of road accidents. Traffic rules also mitigate unauthorized use of vehicles on roads. One must not indulge in over speeding and dangerous driving as per these rules. Driving after the consumption of alcohol is a punishable crime which leads to many fatal accidents. One ought not to follow these rules just to avoid challans for infringement of traffic rules but the practice of these rules in letter and spirit is necessary for personal safety of drivers and all others who ply on the road. Each and every life is important and each and every life must be saved.



<https://lawtrend.in/madras-hc-directs-a-man-booked-for-drunken-driving-to-distribute-pamphlets-against-drunken-driving-as-a-bail-condition/>

'Do not Drink and Drive' has been the motto of traffic rules. It needs to be followed strictly. More than 40 people lose their lives in road accidents daily in India. If we add passengers to it then the figure may run in hundreds. Though there is provision of monetary and jail sentence yet one must avoid driving in the spell of drinking. Car, bike and other vehicles insurance is must under Motor Vehicles Act of 1988. It is issued for a period of one year. After the validity is over one must get it renewed. Failing which there is provision for a penalty of 2000 Rupees. Wearing of seat belts is something people usually ignore. But these seat belts minimize the harm in case of an accident. One must make a habit of fastening seat belts as and when one sits in the car. The violators of this rule have to pay a fine of Rs.1000. Wearing of Helmet while driving two-wheelers is also necessary which can save one in case of accidents. People usually don't wear helmet in rural pockets and small towns in the country. But in metros they do so to avoid getting challenged by traffic police. One forgets that it is for his own safety and the safety of the fortunes of their families. Non compliance to helmet rules has a penalty of 1000 Rupees. Money does not matter much. What actually matters is your own safety. Before indulging in rash driving and violating the traffic rules one must understand that his family will be ruined if something serious happens to him. Then a number of people have the habit of attending mobile phone calls while riding two wheelers. By doing so they put their own life at risk as well as the lives of others. New Motor Vehicle Act of 2020 has the provision of a fine of 5000 Rupees to those who are found attending to mobile phones while driving a bike or a car. Driver is only allowed to use it as a navigational tool. Not adhering to traffic signals has become a hard habit with most of Indians. One must not jump Red Lights. The violators can be fined Rs.5000 and one year prison sentence for violating Red Lights. Blowing horns near schools and hospitals is also banned.

The traffic rules in India start with the basic rule of keeping to the left. It is applicable on drivers, bicycle riders and

pedestrians. Use of dippers at night can minimize numerous head on collisions and safe life and property. Then people lack the habit of using indicators. No vehicle comes without indicators but majority of people don't make use of it. Indicators must be given at least 50 meters before turning to the left or right so that the vehicles following you might put their foot on the breaks and minimize the speed of their vehicles. In case you have to turn right, you must be at the centre of the road. Vehicles must be slowed while arriving at any road interjection or pedestrian crossing. Overtaking must always be done from the right side. You must blow horn before and while overtaking a vehicle. Wearing of helmet by two-wheeler driver as well as pillion is necessary. Only one pillion is permitted on one vehicle. Driving in reverse direction is violation of traffic rules and it is punishable by law. Following of speed limits and traffic signals must be made a habit as it is necessary for road and your own safety. Honking should be carried out only when it is necessary. While driving in hilly areas the vehicle must be towards the right side of the road. Carrying inflammable goods and explosives is prohibited. Overtaking whenever necessary must be done from the right side. These are some of the basic traffic rules which may minimize road accidents to a great extent.

The pedestrians must look around before crossing the road. Particularly looking towards the left side is very important. They should avoid crossing the road when there is green light for vehicles. While driving or even walking the use of mobile phones can prove dangerous. People even use mobile phones while crossing the road which may cause road accidents. One must understand that nothing is more important than life in this world. If you have an urgent call to make or attend you may find some place near the road to make or attend the call. The best practice is to make return call after reaching your destination. Many people don't know the meaning and importance of zebra crossings. All vehicles must be stopped before the zebra crossing as zebra crossing is meant for the pedestrians. Drivers are expected

note to ignore traffic lights, speed limits, not entering the No Entry zones, use turn signals, give way to ambulances and emergency vehicles, follow lane rules, use dippers at night, slow down the speeds at intersections and keep medical kit with them. They must not drive after taking intoxicants particularly alcohol. Use of mobile phone while driving is

very dangerous. All these are open violations of traffic rules and trespassers may be penalized for violation of such rules. But one must understand that these rules are made for their own and public road safety. It should not be fowled just to avoid challans but they must be followed because you cannot play with the lives of others.



<https://www.cars24.com/blog/what-to-do-in-case-of-accident-on-road/>

People think that there is no need to follow traffic rules after 10: 00 pm as there are no policemen at duty. That's why they take risks and indulge in rash driving. They often use reverse gear to reverse a vehicle on a one-way road. Many people don't care about parking their vehicles. There are many who park their vehicles virtually at any place which may cause traffic jams or cause other types of inconvenience to people. You may find drivers overtaking other vehicles from the right side just because the vehicle going ahead is not giving them passage for overtaking. Drivers also drive even after drinking or consuming other intoxicants in the night thinking that there might not be traffic policemen on duty at night. But everybody knows that driving and drinking have no match. If you drink you should avoid driving after that. If you drive you may drink after reaching your destination or the place where you plan to spend your night. Often the youth relishes and takes pride in hands free driving even on Highways. All these habits must be curbed. We don't follow traffic rules just because of the fear of the police but they need to be followed to prove that you are disciplined citizens and care about the lives of others. Fear of police is one thing but following the rules as responsible citizen is another thing.

We have discussed in detail the traffic rules, their need and necessity, their importance, penalties for their infringements and do's and don'ts of driving. Now the question arises why people indulge in violation of traffic rules. One must admit that our system has corrupted beyond limits. India is ranked 85<sup>th</sup> among 180 countries so far as latest data, about

corruption in public places is concerned. Although corruption has been found all over India but Maharashtra and Rajasthan top the table as per national reports. The same stands true about traffic rules violations. The guilty grease the palm of concerned person on duty and get scot free. That is precisely why there are so many people violating these rules. It may also be ascribed as the reason of alarming rate of road accidents. Driving licenses are issued to sheer imbecile and untrained people just because of corruption. People are let free even if they don't have driving license, valid vehicle insurance policy, pollution certificate, copy of vehicle registration to say the least.

In order to spread awareness about traffic rules Digital Media can work wonders. Enough information in textual, visual, audio and audio-visual formats is available on Digital Media which can spread awareness about traffic rules and educate the people to follow those rules and regulations from the cores of their hearts. Videos are available on YouTube for learning the skills of driving. These videos give handy information and education how to drive a car and what precautions are to be kept in mind while driving on the road. People can learn a lot from these videos. Then enough textual information is available on Internet regarding Indian traffic rules. There is list of penalties also for violation of such regulations. Social media can also play a big role in spreading awareness about the do's and don'ts of driving. Youth is the main consumer of social media and the youth is our target group as it forms more than 65% of Indian population. There can be videos and other visual material on

Facebook and Instagram. Training camps and seminars etc. are organized by traffic Police in many parts of the country but they have limited reach.

## 2. Conclusion

Digital media has unlimited reach. It has transcended all the political and geographical boundaries. It has unmatched access. It is available on all Internet gadgets from anywhere in the world. They are impeccable in their reach and affect. Media literacy is all about the process used in all media literacy competencies. As it depends heavily on consumer generated content so there is always the danger of getting trapped in misinformation. Media literacy is a part of curriculum in Western countries, particularly the USA which helps a lot to help people, scholars and students become media literates. Digital Media Literacy can spread information on a huge variety of topics. Virtually all the information is available on Internet for free. Digital Media can spread information about traffic rules, causes of accidents, suggest measures about safe driving and disseminate information about the penalties. Digital Media literacy and provide information what traditional and industrial media can't do. Audio-visual information on YouTube, Facebook or Instagram can help spread information about traffic rules. Digital Media Literacy has been working wonders in all spheres of life. Succinctly speaking, this media has great potential in the field of Traffic Literacy which is of immense importance these days. This article underscores the potential of digital media literacy in enhancing the implementation of traffic rules in India. By leveraging digital media, it is possible to spread awareness about traffic rules and contribute to road safety. This approach could play a significant role in reducing road accidents in the country.

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