

Need of Good Samaritan Law for Increasing Willingness of Bystanders to Assist Victims of RTA

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Abstract

Road traffic accidents are a silent pandemic especially in a country like India where urbanization has been happening on a large scale recently and most of the population travel to cities for employment, education etc. which cannot be averted. The worst hit are major cities like Mumbai, Chennai and other metropolitan cities where accidents claim several lives and also cause disability in other cases, either short term or permanent. The price which is paid by the affected person cannot be estimated just on a monetary basis as it affects the overall quality of life of not just the person but also of the family members. Even people who are willing to assist accident victims are reluctant due to several factors; few of them being legal hassles and the fear of detention at the hospitals. Hence this paper will focus on the present need of good Samaritan laws and their appropriate enforcement for increasing the willingness of bystanders to assist RTA victims, as this is the solution until such accidents can be averted as a whole.

Key Words: Road traffic accident (RTA), Samaritan law, golden hour, trauma, emergency

INTRODUCTION

The Law Commission of India states that 50% of the 13 lakh people who died due to RTAs in India were from preventable injuries and could have been saved if they had received care on time. The Golden hour is the first hour of the incident, where emergency treatment is needed and is very critical for patient's survival. In the absence of established emergency medical services, bystanders can play a game changing role in saving lives.

OBJECTIVE

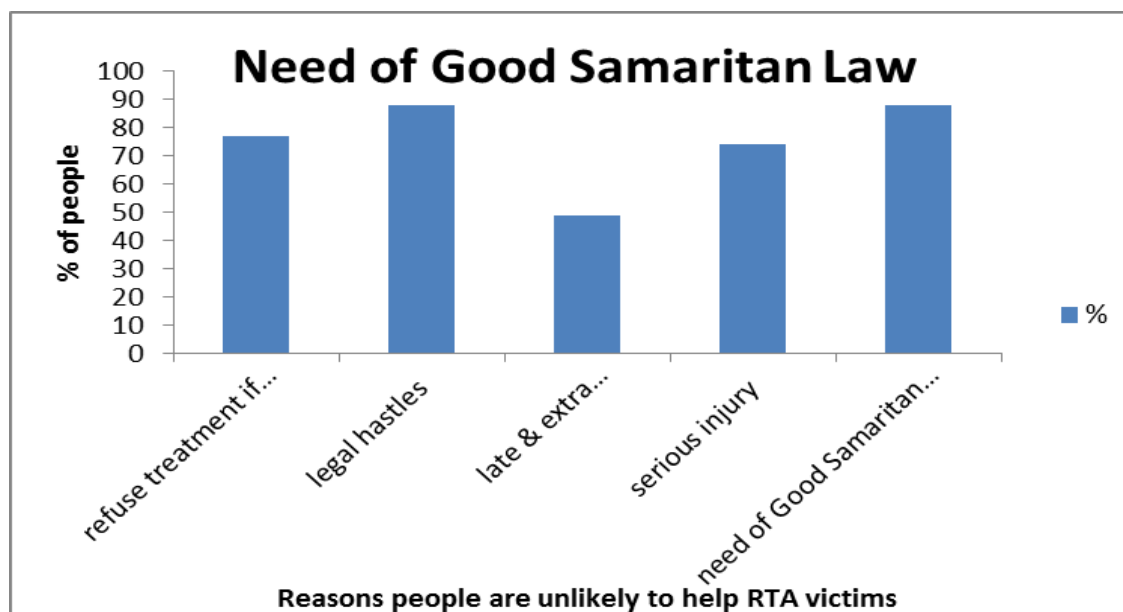
To understand the role and importance of Good Samaritan law to encourage people to assist victims of RTAs.

METHODOLOGY

- Data was collected from literature review of relevant newspaper articles, national surveys relating to RTA and Good Samaritan law; from the period: 2012 to 2017.
- The data was summarized and tabulated using excel.

RESULTS

The data obtained after systematic review was tabulated. As seen in the bar diagram, most of the respondents felt the reason that people are more unlikely to help victims of RTA - being the need of Good Samaritan laws followed by legal hassles (with negligible difference) that the person might have to undergo on helping the RTA victims. Other factors being serious injury of the RTA victims, distress of getting late as a consequence of detention at hospitals; and also the fear of the possibility of refusal of treatment being provided to RTA victims by the hospital authorities due to any other reason.



CONCLUSION

Enforcement of good Samaritan act has the ability to increase the tendency of bystanders to help RTA victims. Many people still have the fear of helping RTA victims. Hence awareness has to be increased by educating people about the law.

The general population is ignorant of many of the measures of the Good Samaritan Scheme. A few of them are provision of monetary assistance to the bystanders who help such RTA victims; along with the Samaritans being awarded with appreciation and acknowledgement Certificates, which will motivate them and in-turn motivate others also to come forward for this noble cause.

There is a greater necessity today for the students in Medical and Allied health courses, to have an in-depth understanding of the present situation of RTAs in India. They are required to get more involved in projects- health promotion and education in relation to RTAs with the initiatives taken by NGOs and the Universities, as one of the ways for increasing awareness among people.

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BIOGRAPHY

Dr Savitha Krishnaswamy

I have done my Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) at Manipal University, Manipal. When I was an intern, I worked at different dental departments thereby interacting with several people (patients and their caregivers) and also getting to understand the different problems each person was undergoing. This made me feel that prevention could be a major solution to many health conditions and not just dental. That motivated me to pursue my Masters in Public Health which deals with researching a particular area and finding what is immediately required to prevent the disease from spreading further and also impacting a larger number of people rather than just the people who come for treatment to the hospitals. I have also attended several Conferences and Workshops in relation to Community Health during my Master's at Department of Public Health, K.S Hegde Medical Academy, NITTE University, Mangaluru.