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Knowledge and Practice of Road Safety Rules and Regulations among Secondary School Students

¹*Sujeeta Baniya, B.Sc. Nursing Graduate*

²*Arati Timilsina, Faculty*
Novel Academy, Purbanchal University, Nepal

ABSTRACT

Road traffic accidents are increasing in alarming ways. During adolescence period driving for curiosity, careless driving, and peer pressure are most common resulting high road traffic accidents. The main objective of the study was to explore the knowledge and practice of road safety rules and regulations. A descriptive cross sectional study design was used to conduct the study. Non-probability quota sampling technique was used to select 240 respondents from 800 students of class 11 and 12 from Pokhara Secondary School. Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the information from respondents. The obtained data was entered on SPSS 16 version program and analyzed and interpreted by using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that more than half (59.2%) of the respondents had moderately adequate knowledge. Nearly three-fourth (70.4%) of the respondents had average practice as a pedestrian and 75.7 percent of the respondents as a driver had average practice. Only 7.5 percent of the respondents were exposed to road traffic accident and high speed was the main cause of accident. More than three quarter (75.7%) had always driven vehicles without license. There was significant association ($p=0.034$) between the faculty of respondents (science and management) and level of knowledge of respondents on road safety rules and regulations. The study concluded that there was moderate level of knowledge and average level of practice of both drivers and pedestrians on road safety rules and regulations among secondary school students. It therefore suggests awareness programs on road safety rules and regulations are significant or school students to promote safety.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge, practice, road safety, rules and regulations, secondary school students

INTRODUCTION

Accident is as an unfortunate incident that happens unexpectedly and unintentionally, resulting in damage or injury (*Oxford dictionary*, 2017). Road traffic safety refers to methods and measures for reducing the risk of a person using the road network being killed or seriously injured. Traffic rules describe the principles and

¹ Ms. Sujeeta Baniya is the principal author of this article.

² Ms. Arati Timilsina who has co-authored this article is the corresponding author.

general ways in which vehicular traffic behaves (Road rules blog, 2012). According to the global status report on road safety 2015 by WHO, road traffic injuries claim more than 1.2 million lives each year. They are the leading cause of death among youth aged between 15 and 29 years (WHO, 2015). In countries of South-East Asia Region of WHO, death and injury due to traffic accidents are rising dramatically. Every hour, 40 people in the South-East Asia Region die as a result of road traffic injuries (WHO, 2011). Roads in Nepal are one of the most dangerous roads in the world and chances of vehicle crashes are more than 100 times higher than in Japan and 10 times higher than in India. One person died in every accident in Nepal in the year 2015 (Adhikari, 2016). In the epidemiological study of road traffic accident cases from Western Nepal conducted on 360 victims, it was found that most of the cases i.e. 147 (40.83%) were young people of 16-30 years (Mishra, Sinha, Shukla, & Sinha, 2010).

According to *The Himalayan Times*, August 18, 2016, Nepal witnessed an average of 27 accidents and five deaths every day in road accidents in the fiscal year 2015/16. Further records maintained by Nepal Police revealed that total of 2006 people were killed and 13048 injured whereas 4882 critically injured among 20013 reported road accidents. The data show the rising trend of road accidents and fatalities in the country. Over 130 road fatalities were reported in the first one and a half months of the current fiscal year 2016/17 (*The Himalayan Times*, 2016). According to the epidemiological study conducted in western Nepal on road traffic accident cases, 360 were victims of road traffic accidents. Among them, 177 (49.16%) cases were reported in school students and 141 (39.15%) cases were reported in graduates. Middle and low socio-economic class people were affected more accounting 198 (55%) and 114 (31.66%) respectively (Mishra et al., 2010).

Adolescence is an age of exploration, a search to discover themselves and the world around them. It is normal for an individual to be interested in driving. Hence, they have to be guided in understanding the various aspects of driving and road safety measures and at the same time instilling right attitude among them (Kaji, 2010). In order to drive safely, it is essential to be fully aware of the road safety and traffic rules and regulations (Road Rules Blog, 2012).

DATA AND METHODS

The research approach used in the study was quantitative approach by using cross sectional research design. The study was conducted in September 2017 among students of grade 11 and 12 from science and management faculty of Pokhara Secondary School located at Bagar-1 Pokhara, Nepal. Area of study was selected by convenient sampling technique. Sixty students each from science and management faculty of both 11 and 12 from total 800 students were chosen for study by non-probability quota sampling technique.

The study was carried out after the approval of research proposal from the research committee of Novel Academy and formal permission from the concerned authorities, i.e. Novel Academy and Pokhara Secondary School. After explaining the purpose of the study, verbal informed consent was taken from respondents prior to data collection. A structured self-administered questionnaire containing questions on socio-demographic details of the respondents and knowledge and practice of road safety rules and regulations constructed by the researcher using literature review and through consultation with the subject experts and guides. The first part consisted of socio-demographic information from number 1 to 11; second part consisted of questions related to knowledge about road safety rules and regulations from question number 12 to 30 and third part consisted of questions related to practice of students on road safety

rules and regulations from question number 30 to 35. The questionnaire was distributed to the selected respondents and collected on the same day. Time taken for each respondent for data collection was 15-20 minutes. Anonymity and confidentiality was maintained throughout the procedure. The data was edited, organized, coded and entered in the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Each correct response for knowledge was given 1 and total score was 22. Each correct response for practice was given 3 and total score was 37. The total score was converted to percentage for knowledge. On the basis of score percentage obtained by the respondents, knowledge level was categorized as adequate knowledge for 76-100%, moderately adequate knowledge for 51-75% and inadequate knowledge for 50 and below (Jayavel & Lisha, 2014). In practice, it was categorized as good practice for more than (mean + SD), Average practice for equal to (mean ± SD) and Poor practice for less than (mean – SD) (Thenmozhi, 2011).

RESULTS

The following tables show the results from the data collection conducted and tabulated as per the research method adopted for the study:

Table 1
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
n=240		
Age		
15	18	7.5
16	71	29.6
17	103	42.9
18	40	16.7
19	08	3.3
Gender		
Female	140	58.3
Male	100	41.7
Current Residence		
Urban	185	77.1
Rural	55	22.9
Living status		
With family	208	86.7
Alone	24	10.0
With friends	08	3.3
Father's educational status		
No education	06	2.5
Primary	35	14.6
Some secondary	53	22.1
SLC or higher	146	60.8
Mother's educational status		
No education	18	7.5
Primary	54	22.5
Some secondary	53	22.1
SLC or higher	115	47.9

Mean ± SD of age =16.79±0.924

Source: Field survey 2017

Table 1 reveals that more than one third (42.9%) of the respondents were of age 17 years. More than half (58.3%) were females. More than three quarters (77.1%) of the respondents were from urban. Majority (86.7%) were living with their family at present. Respondents' parents' education level were SLC or higher which was 60.8 percent and 47.9 percent respectively.

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Driving Experience

n=103		
Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Years of experience		
≤2	74	71.8
>2	29	28.2
Have a driving license	26	25.2
Type of license		25.2
2 wheeler	26	10.8

Source: Field survey 2017

Table 2 reveals that among the respondents who experienced driving, 71.8 percent have been driving since less or equal to two years. Only 25.2 percent of respondents have driving license of two wheelers.

Table 3
Knowledge of Road Safety Rules and Regulations among Respondents

n=240		
Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Reason to follow the traffic signals*		
For safety	173	37.0
Avoid accidents	168	35.9
Aware of dangers	64	13.7
Save one's life	63	13.5
Age to get driving license	131	54.6
Always used zebra crossing to cross roads	186	77.5
Average speed limit for driving	146	60.8
Indication of green color	215	89.6
Indication of yellow color	210	87.5
Indication of red color	219	91.3
Road signs ≥ 3 signs	197	82.1
Necessary to wear helmet while travelling in two wheeler	220	91.7
Compulsory to put on seat belt while in a car	224	93.3
Right side used to overtake vehicles	153	63.8
Safe side of road used to walk	54	22.5
Maximum penalty for driving without license	76	31.7
Frequency to check the condition of vehicles	118	49.2

*Multiple responses

Source: Field survey 2017

Table 3 shows that more than one third (37%) of the respondents expressed safety as the reason to follow the traffic lights whereas to save one's life by 13.5 percent. More than

half (54.6%) gave correct responses about the age to get license. More than three quarter (77.5%) answered zebra crossing should always be used while crossing the road. More than half (60.8%) responded 40 km/hr is the average speed limit. Indication of green, yellow and red color was known by 89.6 percent, 87.5 percent and 91.3 percent respectively. Majority (82.1%) of respondents know more than 3 signs, less than one fourth (22.5%) knew about the safe side to walk, less than half (31.7%) knew about penalty for driving without license.

Table 4
Knowledge Level of Respondents on Road Safety Rules and Regulations

n=240		
Knowledge level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Adequate knowledge (76-100%)	82	34.2
Moderately adequate knowledge (51-75%)	142	59.2
Inadequate knowledge (50% and below)	16	6.7

Source: Field survey 2017

Table 4 shows that 59.2 percent of the respondents had moderately adequate level of knowledge and more than one third (34.2%) had adequate level of knowledge on road safety rules and regulations.

Table 5
Practice of Pedestrian on Road Safety Rules and Regulations

n=240		
Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Use zebra crossing to cross road		
Always	151	62.9
Sometimes	87	36.3
Never	02	0.8
Obey road signs and symbols		
Always	142	59.2
Sometimes	93	38.8
Never	05	2.1
Side to look before crossing the road	26	10.8
Exposed to RTAs	18	7.5
Injured in accident	16	6.7
Admitted in hospital	03	1.3
Reasons for accident		
High speed	06	2.5
Street animals	04	1.7
While crossing road	04	1.7
Careless driving	03	1.3
Poor road condition	01	0.4

Source: Field survey 2017

Table 5 shows more than half (62.9%) respondents always used zebra crossing to the cross-road. More than half (59.2%) obeyed the road signs and symbols always. Minimum respondents (10.8%) used correct way before crossing road. About 7.5 percent

were exposed to RTA among which 6.7 percent were injured. About 1.3 percent was admitted to hospital and high speed among 2.5 percent was the main cause of accident.

Table 6
Practice Level of Respondents as Pedestrians on Road Safety Rules and Regulations
n=240

Practice level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Good practice	24	10.0
Average practice	169	70.4
Poor practice	47	19.6
Mean ± S.D: 5.4542±1.05397		Source: Field survey 2017

Table 6 reveals that, as a pedestrian, 10 percent of the respondents have good practice of road safety rules and regulations and 70.4 percent had average practice.

Table 7
Practice Level of Respondents as Drivers on Road Safety Rules and Regulations
n=103

Practice level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Good practice	14	13.6
Average practice	78	75.7
Poor practice	11	10.7
Mean ±S.D= 20.0680±2.24159		Source: Field survey 2017

Table 7 shows that as a driver, 13.6 percent of the respondents had good level of practice of road safety rules and regulations and 75.7 percent had average practice.

Table 8
Association of Level of Knowledge with Socio-Demographic Variables of Respondents
n=240

Variables	Knowledge level			Chi square value (χ^2)	p- value
	Adequate	Moderately Adequate	Inadequate		
Age					
<17	69 (35.9%)	110 (57.3%)	13 (6.8%)	1.467	0.480
>17	13 (27.1%)	32 (66.7%)	03 (6.2%)		
Gender					
Male	37 (37.0%)	56 (56.0%)	07 (7%)	0.722	0.697
Female	45 (32.1%)	86 (61.4%)	09 (6.4%)		
Class					
11	43 (35.8%)	68 (56.7%)	09 (7.5%)	0.699	0.705
12	39 (32.5%)	74 (61.7%)	07 (5.8%)		
Faculty					
Science	42 (35.0%)	75 (62.5%)	03 (2.5%)	6.749	0.034*
Management	40 (33.33%)	67 (55.8)	13(10.8%)		
Residence					
Urban	63 (34.1%)	113 (61.1%)	09 (4.9%)	4.434	0.109

Rural	19 (34.5%)	29 (52.7%)	07 (12.7%)		
Driving license				0.684	0.710
Yes	07 (26.9%)	17 (65.4%)	02 (7.7%)		
No	75 (35.0%)	125 (58.4%)	14 (6.5%)		
Driving experience				5.548	0.062
Yes	43 (41.3%)	57 (54.8%)	04 (3.8%)		
No	39 (28.7%)	85 (62.5%)	12 (8.8%)		

*significant association Source: Field survey 2017

Table 8 shows that there is significant association ($p=0.034$) between the faculty and level of knowledge. Likewise there was no significant association of socio-demographic variables like age, gender, class, residence, driving license and driving experience with level of knowledge.

Association of Level of Pedestrians Practice with Socio-Demographic Variables of Respondents

There is no any association between the socio-demographic variables and level of practice of respondents as pedestrians.

Correlation of knowledge and practice

There is no relationship ($r=-0.10$, $p=0.883$ and $r=0.027$, $p= 0.785$) between the knowledge and practice score on road safety rules and regulations as pedestrians and drivers respectively among secondary school students.

DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this descriptive study was to investigate the knowledge and practice of road safety rules and regulations among secondary school students. With regards to the knowledge about road safety rules and regulations, in the present study, 34.2 percent of the respondents had adequate knowledge. This finding is similar with the findings of study conducted in India which showed 28 percent of the respondents had adequate knowledge (Thenmozhi, 2011)

Regarding knowledge of road safety rules and regulations, more than half (54.6%) of the respondents know the legal age to get driving license which is contrasting with the similar study done in Chennai that showed 97.5 percent of the respondents revealed the same. The findings of the present study shows that more than half (60.8%) of the respondents know the average speed limit for driving which is similar to a study conducted in Chennai which revealed 54.4 percent of respondents knew the average limit for driving (Mary, Chitra, Arunmozhi, & Doris, 2016). The present study reveals that indication of green, yellow and red colors of traffic light is known by majority of the respondents, i.e. 89.6 percent, 87.5 percent and 91.3 percent respectively which is consistent with the study conducted in Maharashtra, India that showed indication of green color by 100 percent, indication of yellow color by 86.9 percent and indication of red color by 100 percent of the respondents (Salve, Dase, Jadhav, Marajan, & Adchitre, 2014).

The findings of the study shows that majority (82.1%) of the respondents recognize three and more road signs given in the questionnaire which is inconsistent to the findings of a study conducted in Chennai which showed only 9.4 percent recognized the road signs. This difference might be because there is difference in education system in India

and Nepal. In the present study, most of (91.7%) the respondents reveals that it is necessary to wear helmet while travelling in two wheelers which is similar to the findings in study conducted in Chennai that showed almost all (99.4%) of the respondents knew that it is necessary to wear helmet. In the present study, most of respondents (93.3%) know that it is compulsory to put on seat belt while in a moving car. The similar finding was found in a study conducted in Chennai which showed 98.1 percent knew the compulsion to wear seatbelt (Mary, 2016).

The present study shows about 63.8 percent of the respondents know that the correct side to overtake vehicles is right side which contradicts with the findings of study conducted in Chennai which showed only 28.3 percent knew the right side to overtake vehicles. It might be due to strict rules of road safety among Nepali people. In the present study, less than one fourth (22.5%) of the respondents know the right side of the road to walk. This result is in contrast with the study done in Chennai which showed 54.2 percent knew the correct side to walk (Mary, 2016). This difference might be due to lack of awareness among people in Nepal.

The present study reveals about one third (31.7%) of the respondents know about the penalty for driving without license which is inconsistent with the findings of a study done in Chennai that showed 56.9 percent knew about the penalty (Mary, 2016). This contrasting result might be due to lack of awareness among public about the road safety rules and regulations.

With regard to the practice of respondents as pedestrians, 10.0 percent had good practice. Similarly, 13.6 percent has good practice as drivers. This finding is similar to the finding of study conducted in India that showed eight percent had good practice (Thenmozhi, 2011).

Regarding the practice of respondents as pedestrians, 62.9 percent always used zebra crossing to the cross-road. In the similar study conducted in Chennai, only 45 percent used the zebra crossing. In the present study, 59.2 percent of the respondents always obeyed road signs and symbols whereas in similar study conducted in Chennai more than three quarter (77.5%) obeyed the road signs and symbols (Mary, 2016).

In the present study, only 10.8 percent looks at the correct side that is right-left before crossing the road where in the study conducted in Tamilnadu 61.44 percent used right-left before crossing road (Ck, Datta, Jayanthi, & Vasudevam, 2011). This difference might be due to the carelessness of the respondents in present study.

The findings of the present study shows that 7.5 percent of the respondents were exposed to road traffic accidents among which 6.7 percent were injured, 1.3 percent was admitted in hospital and high speed was the main cause of accident among 2.5 percent of respondents who got RTA. In the similar study conducted in KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), 50 percent were exposed to RTA, among which 83.3 percent were injured, 41.6 percent were admitted to hospital and high speed among 50 percent was the main cause of accident (Al-zahrani, 2014).

With regard to the practice of respondents as drivers, in the present study, 42.92 percent practices driving. Among them, 65 percent crossed the driving speed limit which is consistent with the findings of study done in Chennai that showed 61.4 percent of the respondents crossed the driving speed limit. The findings of the present study shows that 87.4 percent of the respondents always uses helmet while driving two wheelers. In the similar study done in Chennai, only 51.9 percent used helmet. Similarly, 61.2 percent of the respondents wear seat belt while travelling in four wheelers which is similar to the findings of study done in Chennai and Malaysia that showed 55.8 percent and 62.4 percent used seatbelt respectively (Mary, 2016) and (Al-Naggar & Al-Jashamy, 2010).

The finding in the present study reveals that 32.0 percent of the respondents had never borrowed vehicles from friends which are consistent with the finding of the study done in Chennai that showed 42 percent never borrowed vehicles from friends. Similarly, in present study, 40.8 percent never drive vehicles without informing parents. This result is consistent with the findings of the study done in Chennai that showed 30 percent never drove vehicles without informing parents. The present study reveals 85.4 percent of the respondents used to stop vehicles for pedestrians to cross road even with no traffic signals or traffic police around that is consistent with the findings from the study done in Chennai which showed 76.1 percent stopped vehicles for pedestrians (Mary, 2016).

The present study reveals that majority (91.6%) of the respondents drove vehicles without license. This result is similar to the study conducted in Chennai that revealed 90.4 percent drove without license. The findings of present study shows 17.5 percent were held by traffic police that is consistent to the study conducted in Chennai that showed 26.6 percent were held by traffic police (Mary, 2016).

With regards to the association of socio-demographic variables and level of knowledge, the findings of present study shows that there is significant association ($p=0.034$) between variable faculty of the respondents and knowledge level. Likewise, there is no association between socio-demographic characteristics and level of pedestrians practice. Similarly, there is no significant association between other variables and the level of knowledge. Likewise, there is no significant relationship ($r=-0.10$, $p=0.883$) between the knowledge and practice score of respondents on road safety rules and regulations. No any supportive literature which showed the association and relationship was found for comparison.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there is moderate level of knowledge and average level of practice of both drivers and pedestrians on road safety rules and regulations among secondary school students. The students from science faculty have more knowledge than students from management faculty. There is no relationship between the knowledge and practice score of road safety rules and regulations. It therefore suggests that awareness programs about road safety rules and regulations are important for school students to promote safety.

Implications

It will be used as a helpful source of reference or baseline data to other future research.

It will be beneficial for the researchers who are interested to study on this topic

This study will provide related information of the study in concerned subject matter.

Limitations

The non-probability quota sampling technique was used in a particular secondary school so the findings cannot be generalized in other setting.

The study was limited only to school students of grade 11 and 12 as road safety rules and regulations which is also the necessity of all aged people.

Recommendations

Awareness program can be conducted to upgrade adequate knowledge and best practice of road safety rules and regulations among secondary school students.

Similar study can be conducted in large scale to draw more conclusions and make the findings generalization.

Similar study can also be done to other general people as it is of great importance to all to know and follow the road safety rules and regulations.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sujeeta Baniya has received her B.Sc. in Nursing from Purbanchal University, Nepal. She has researched on the road safety rules and regulations among students, which was submitted to the university in 2018 as a dissertation for the degree in nursing.

Arati Timilsina holds a Master's Degree in Advanced Adult Nursing from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Currently she is a Lecturer at Novel Academy, Purbanchal University, Pokhara and has also worked for Charak Academy, Pokhara as Nursing Instructor and at Manipal Teaching Hospital, Pokhara as a Staff Nurse. She has published a couple of articles on topics related to nursing.