

Low percentage of people taking safety measures on roads: study

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR: A new study on drivers and passengers taking safety measures on roads in Rajasthan has revealed a low percentage of people wearing helmets on two-wheelers and seatbelts in cars and other four-wheelers. Only 39 per cent of road users wear helmets and 34 per cent wear seat-belts correctly in the State.

The study, undertaken by the Centre for Injury Research in the Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) University, was the first of its kind covering the urban and rural areas and the highways in all the seven administrative divisions of the State through a baseline survey.

Only 15 per cent of motorcycle riders wear helmets correctly in Bharatpur and a mere 0.1 per cent of pillion riders wear helmets in Kota, said the Centre for Injury Research coordinator Alok Mathur here on Thursday. Two-third of the riders pay fines for not wearing a helmet, according to the study.

Seat-belts

The number of four-wheeler drivers wearing seat-belt varies from 70 per cent in Jaipur to a mere eight per cent in Bharatpur. Dr. Mathur said the self-reported use of helmets by motorcycle riders in urban areas was 60.8 per cent, while it was 41 per cent in the rural areas and 56.2 per cent on the highways.

Among the drivers using

seat-belts, it was reported by two-third of them that seat-belts save lives, while more than two-fifth reported that it was required by law. Another two-fifth reported that they wear seatbelts because of the fear of fine by the police and four per cent wear seat-belts as the car indicates it with a beep.

Awareness campaigns

Making recommendations for improving road safety on the basis of the study's findings, Dr. Mathur said there was an urgent need to launch awareness campaigns through mass media across the State for highlighting the benefits of seat-belts and helmets.

Dr. Mathur pointed out that since the awareness on wearing of helmets for pillion rid-

ers was low, spreading a word with the school children giving away an emotional message may change the practice and the whole scenario.

Awareness campaign

"As the State government has taken action for compulsive usage of helmets and seat-belts, a massive awareness campaign can also be launched with an intelligent use of information and communication technology in order to ensure a behavioural change," he said.

The IIHMR University will hand over the study's findings to the Sardar Patel University of Police, Security and Criminal Justice, Jodhpur, to facilitate implementation of the latter's project to improve road safety in the State.