

Almost 27,000 Indian Truck Drivers Die Due To Lack Of Sleep. One Man Trying to Change This.

Surabhi Sinha · 9th April 2016

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"The truck driver is the fighting soldier of country's economic system."

Sadly, the above mentioned truth is not recognized or acknowledged by many. Truck drivers in India live a life that is not considered at par with other jobs and definitely not one of the respectable jobs. They have no lives, they are constantly on the roads, driving day and night, 24x7, away from their families in all seasons and all festivities.

And the worst part is the number of deaths that road accidents, especially trucks cause. And the blame goes on the driver. Nobody stops for a minute and asks the question why and how it became the driver's fault.

Ramesh Agarwal, the owner of the Agarwal Packers and Movers famous across the nation recognized and realized what he could do right by the truck drivers and is doing exactly that - providing them with cots to sleep on.



Ramesh Agarwal recalls that the idea for a service center dedicated especially for truck drivers came to him while he was in Istanbul for a conference and listening to a presentation on transport.

He says that he heard the speaker say "India is world's number one". As an automatic response, assuming it was a praise, and considering his weak English, he started clapping, only to find himself being the only person doing so. He says, "I looked around, and immediately realized I had done something wrong. I asked around, and that's when I realized the presenter had said India was leading the number of road deaths in the world."

He got back to India and after a lot of research he found that out of the 1,39,000 people died in road accidents every year, 26,678 died due to lack of sleep.



Commercial vehicle drivers were the ones in most road accidents and the reason was very obvious. Agarwal says that after reading about the statistics he "felt like I got an electric shock. I felt so guilty."

Agarwal, meanwhile met up with truck drivers in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan, and asked them the reason for their lack of sleep

He said, "All of them laughed at my question and asked me where did I think they could sleep. Even though now trucks manufactured by good companies are more comfortable, they can't sleep in them for extended periods of time because of security problems.

The truck drivers in India lead a life that involves them sleeping for only 2-3 hours a day or taking pills to stay awake



Image source

Most of these pills (or as called by them - kali golis) are opium based and addictive.

And that is when, together with the AITWA (All India Transport Welfare Association), Ramesh Agarwal set up the Driver Service Center, aka the Nidra Daan Center

The motive? To provide our truck drivers sleep, other facilities and subsequently avoid road accidents.

The Driver Service Center is located somewhere at NH-8 between Jaipur and Ajmer



Image source

The other facility is ready to open near NH-6 in Malkhapur, on the route between Surat and Kolkata, later this month. Both facilities will be open 24x7 for truck drivers and = and all they have to do is sign a statement that says they will use the facility to get 6 hours of sleep. But that's not all.

The Driver Service Center, has the capacity to fit in 250 trucks at a time, and has 500 cots for drivers to sleep and get rest. In addition to that, clean bathrooms, barber services, small repair shops are available all free of cost



Image source

Not only that, but drivers are welcomed to the center by washing their feet, which in India is a huge sign of respect. One driver said, "In my 18 years of professional life I have never seen someone wash a driver's feet. I have seen this the first time today. Drivers are also respected."

This act of selflessness from Ramesh Agarwal has not just infused confidence in the drivers but also made them believe that there is someone looking out for them as well. He estimates they might have saved 41 lives on the Jaipur stretch alone every month.

"Great Indian drivers - a revolutionary CSR for safe Driving by Agarwal Mov..."



He adds, "I want to change the mindset against these drivers, who are the backbone of this industry. They are neglected and need to be given their dignity and lives back."

It's surprising how nobody respects or knows about the hardships faced by the soldiers of the country's economic system. Well, time to change that, one Driver Service Center at a time.

Make my judgement sound as steel,

And be my hands upon the wheel.