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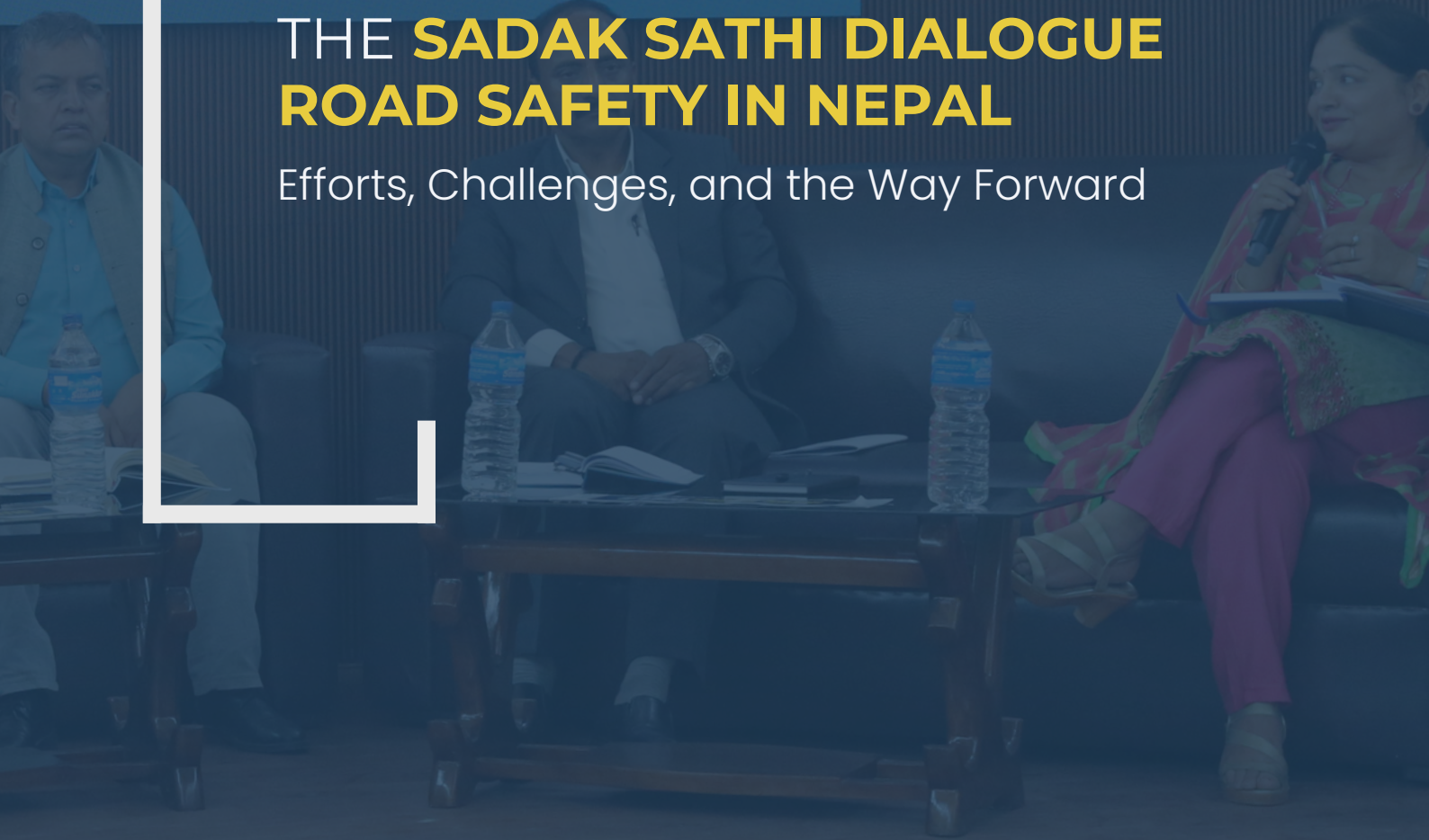
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Bhim Prasad Dhakal
(Retired AIG, Nepal Police)

KEY ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS FROM THE **SADAK SATHI DIALOGUE** **ROAD SAFETY IN NEPAL**

Efforts, Challenges, and the Way Forward



Key Actionable Insights from the Sadak Sathi Dialogue on Road Safety

The recent multi-sectoral dialogue on Road Safety, organized by Sadak Sathi, brought together leadership voices from infrastructure, enforcement, health, and legal sectors. The event generated critical and actionable points directly aligned with Nepal's current road safety and emergency response gaps. This document is a synthesis of key interventions suggested during the panel discussion.



Date
Baisakh 20, 2082

Attendance
85



Venue
Department of Roads

Duration
2.5 hrs





Hon. Minister Devendra Dahal

Ministry of Physical
Infrastructure and
Transport

Keynote Speaker

Top Contributors to RTIs Identified: Minister Dahal cited 8 global factors leading to RTIs, of which 4—over-speeding, careless driving, rule violation, and DUI—are human behavioral factors accounting for over 80% of Nepal’s RTIs.

Systemic Gaps Highlighted:

- Fragmented and inconsistent data recording systems.
- Political interference and corruption in licensing.
- Inadequate enforcement and low public compliance (e.g. seatbelt/helmet use).

Strategic Recommendations:

- **Strict law enforcement** and awareness as joint levers.
- A **dedicated Road Safety Act**, currently under drafting.
- **Centralized budgeting model** for effective road safety fund utilization.
- Emphasis on **Safe System Approach**: prioritize fewer but safer roads.
- **Vehicle fitness and driver training** (especially promotion from conductor to driver).
- **AI, automation, and surveillance** for real-time monitoring.
- Establishment of **highway trauma centers** and a stronger **emergency response system**.



Dr. Nilam Kumar Khadka

Senior Neurosurgeon,
National Trauma Centre

Urgency for Trauma Registries:

- Data deficit obstructs evidence-based policy.
- **Central trauma registry** with linked databases is essential.
- Research shows **60% of head injury deaths** stem from preventable post-crash factors (e.g., hypoxia, hypotension).

Post-Crash Care Framework:

Pre-Hospital Care

First aid, ambulance readiness.

Hospital Care

Access to trained specialists and equipment.

Rehabilitation

Reintegration of crash victims into society.

Additional Points:

- Establish **Level 3/4 trauma centers** along highways.
- **Golden Hour interventions** reduce fatalities by up to 60%.
- Pillion riders are **3x more prone** to head injuries. Enforce the pillion helmet law which already exists in the Motor Vehicle and Transport Management Act, 2049.
- **DUI enforcement** has halved such cases in Nepal—sustain it.



Ram Hari Pokharel
Director General,
Department of Roads

Systemic Barriers:

- Engineering alone does not prevent crashes: e.g., high fatalities even on top-grade roads like Koteshwor–Suryabinayak.
- Rural roads often host old, unsafe vehicles with limited regulation.

Recommendations:

- Mandatory **Road Safety Audits** for all international funded road projects.
- **Black spot identification and mitigation** ongoing.
- **10%** of road upgrade budgets allocated to safety measures on all foreign aid projects.

Challenges:

- Fragmented responsibilities.
- 25-year delay in operationalizing the **National Road Safety Council**.

Call to Action:

- Acknowledge **behavior and enforcement** gaps.
- Support **post-crash care mechanisms**, including Good Samaritan Law and trauma centers.
- Ensure **feedback loops and monitoring** from civic actors like Sadak Sathi.

Bhim Prasad Dhakal
Retired Additional
Inspector General,
Nepal Police



Systemic Barriers:

- Human resource shortage: only ~2,600 traffic personnel nationwide.
- Overburdened police and lack of multi-agency collaboration.
- Cultural mindset: rules viewed as optional, undermining enforcement.

Recommendations:

- Increase **finances and penalties** to deter violations.
- Institutionalize **AI-governed traffic systems**.
- Build a **data-driven approach** with national coordination.
- Encourage household-level **road safety awareness**.

Dr. Resham Raj Regmi
Senior Advocate,
Supreme Court



Legal Gaps & Constitutional Mandates:

- Constitution (Article 51) requires state to ensure road user safety.
- **Transport Act 2049** and drafted **Road Safety Bill** need modernization and enforcement.
- Current legal system overly focuses on “rights” over “duties”.

Strong Endorsement for Good Samaritan Law:

- Fear of legal and police harassment deters bystander help.
- Law must clearly protect and incentivize Good Samaritans.

Proposal for Behavioral Regulation:

- Introduce **vehicle-free hours, one-way systems, pedestrian priority zones.**



Dr. Bhagabati Sedain
Moderator, Professor
& Road Safety Advocate

Critical Gaps Identified:

- Footpath exemption for roads under 20 feet contradicts pedestrian-first logic.
- The **National Trauma Registry (2019–2021)** was discontinued due to lack of sustained government funding.
- A 30% mismatch found between police data and hospital registry in past research

Recommendations:

- Reinstate and fund the **Trauma Registry** as a national system.
- Harmonize data from police, hospitals, and local bodies.
- Institutionalize **pedestrian safety infrastructure** even on narrow roads.

Overall Recommendations

This multi-stakeholder discussion underscores the **urgent need for a unified, accountable, and data-driven National Road Safety Strategy** in Nepal. The key asks are:

- **Pass and implement the Road Safety Act and the Good Samaritan Law.**
- Establish and sustain a **national trauma registry** with full government backing.
- Ensure **multi-agency collaboration** with clear division of responsibilities.
- Institutionalize **post-crash care systems** (trauma centers, first aid, EMS).
- Deploy **AI and automated enforcement systems** to replace reactive policing.
- Mobilize civic bodies and NGOs (e.g., Sadak Sathi) with dedicated funding and authority.

With coordination, legislation, and civic engagement, Nepal can dramatically improve road safety outcomes and move toward **Vision Zero** – the global goal of zero road fatalities.

Message from the Founder

Sadak Sathi was born out of a deeply personal place. A few years ago, I was involved in a serious road traffic incident – an experience that not only changed the trajectory of my life but also exposed me to the many cracks in our road safety and emergency response systems. Some of my close friends have suffered similar fates. These painful, preventable tragedies compelled us – a group of committed friends – to build Sadak Sathi, with one goal in mind: to ensure fewer people have to go through what we did.



We at Sadak Sathi are doing our part. But as rightly echoed in the panel, road safety can't be addressed in isolation. It demands coordinated, multisectoral efforts – from government bodies to law enforcement, engineers to healthcare workers, legal experts to grassroots communities. Today, we were joined by many of these key actors, which gives me hope. But hope alone is not enough.

Seven people die on Nepali roads every day – a number that doesn't account for the long-term trauma, disability, and loss that follow. Behind every statistic is a grieving family, a life cut short, a dream unfulfilled. The time for performative statements and symbolic gestures is over. We are not clout-chasers. We are not fake advocates. We are not whistleblowers looking for headlines. We are changemakers – and we will not sit back while lives continue to be lost to negligence, indifference, and systemic inaction.

To everyone reading this – we urge you to join us. Let's build safer roads, faster response systems, and a culture that values every life.



Nipuna Neupane

Founder, Managing Director



ROAD SAFETY IN NEPAL

Efforts, Challenges and the Way Forward



At Sadak Sathi, we believe that safer roads are a shared responsibility. Whether you're an organization, policymaker, researcher, or passionate individual, we invite you to join us in our mission to make Nepal's roads safer through education, advocacy, and innovation. Let's collaborate to create impactful solutions that save lives and build a future where road safety is a priority for all. Reach out to us—we'd love to hear from you!



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