

SuVahaks - Driver Training & Road Safety Enhancement Programme
A Flagship Skill Development & Road Safety Initiative of Government of Odisha



1. Background & Rationale

Heavy Motor Vehicle (HMV) drivers play a crucial role in ensuring safe and efficient movement of goods across the state. However, limited access to structured driver training and the absence of refresher programs often lead to unsafe driving practices. Recognizing this, the Government of Odisha has adopted a systematic, training-based intervention to improve professional driving skills, promote safe road behaviour, and reduce accident risks, particularly among long-haul commercial drivers. Government of Odisha has established **Institute of Driving Training and Research (IDTR)** centres across the state with **world-class infrastructure that stands among the best in the country and Asia** to improve driving skills of drivers.

2. Objective

Project SuVahak was launched with a primary objective to **enhance road safety awareness and improve the driving skills of HMV drivers** through a comprehensive, residential training model. The project not only focuses on new (fresher) drivers but also supports existing (refresher) drivers by providing wage compensation, ensuring they can attend training without financial hardship.

3. Implementation Framework

A robust institutional ecosystem has been established for driver training through **four operational Institutes of Driver Training and Research (IDTRs)** located at **Chhatia (Jajpur), Palur (Ganjam), Keonjhar, Bonai (Sundargarh)**.

These centres provide fully **residential, high-quality training programmes equipped with modern classrooms, driving simulators, practice tracks, and assessments** conducted by certified trainers. The curriculum covers **road safety rules, defensive driving, vehicle handling, fatigue management, and emergency response**. The programme covers **fresher drivers**, who undergo a **30-day training course**, and **refresher drivers**, who participate in a **3-day mandatory training**, required at the time of renewal of Heavy Motor Vehicle (HMV) driving licences.

To ensure inclusivity and accessibility, **the State Government bears the entire cost of training, including accommodation, food, health check-ups, training materials, and the issuance of a free driving licence**. Additionally, **wage compensation** is provided to refresher drivers, so they do not face economic hardship during the training period. The **campuses are maintained as tobacco-free** environments to promote healthy habits and discipline among participants.

The programme also adopts a socially inclusive approach by **extending training to women, transgenders, and prisoners**, enabling them to acquire professional driving skills and supporting their integration into the workforce.

4. Outcomes & Achievements

The programme has demonstrated significant impact in improving driver competency and road safety outcomes across the state:

- From inception, **more than 85,000 drivers** (including both fresher and refresher categories) have been trained under Suvahak.
- From inception, **more than 6,700 trained drivers** have secured employment through campus placement organised at IDTRs.
- Of these, **30 drivers have been placed in overseas employment in Japan**, showcasing global-level skill recognition.
- **475 drivers** have been recruited through the state-level *Nijukti Mela*.
- Notably, **no accidents have been reported involving drivers trained at IDTRs**, marking a strong validation of the programme's effectiveness.
- The initiative was recognised nationally and received the **Road Safety FICCI Award in 2024**.

5. Conclusion

The SuVahak initiative marks a transformative step in strengthening road safety through professional driver training. By providing structured learning, modern training infrastructure, wage support, and placement opportunities, Odisha has created a model that directly contributes to reducing road accidents. Collectively, these advanced, safety-focused and industry-aligned facilities **elevate Odisha as a leading model for professional driver training excellence** in the region. The programme not only enhances the livelihood prospects of commercial drivers but also establishes a safer, more reliable transport system for the state.