



## IIT Indore decodes mystery of distracted driving

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Focused Research Group in Human Factors (FRGHF) of Indian Institute of Technology Indore has decoded the mystery of distracted driving, which is a major road safety concern all over the world.

"If a driver gets engaged in any other task besides

driving, then that task consumes cognitive resources of the driver due to which they are not able to pay attention," the research finds.

From the last one-and-half decades, the problem of distracted driving has worsened as more information and entertainment based technologies have found their way in the vehicles.

According to the reports from union ministry of road transport and highways, the total number of persons killed in road accidents increased by 4.6 percent from 1,39,671 in 2014 to 1,46,133 in 2015.

"Human factors & applied lab conducted an experiment in a naturalistic driving environment in order to investigate the effect of distraction on visu-



al behaviour of drivers," said Rahul Sharma, PRO, IIT Indore.

The drivers were instructed to follow certain directions displayed on the sign boards, which were installed along the experimental track. During driving, they were supposed to perform another task (distracting task).

The researchers found that the group of drivers,

which was distracted looked at the signboards for a very short period of time as compared to the group, which was not distracted.

"The reason is that our working memory has a mechanism called as 'Articulatory Rehearsal Mechanism' (ARM), which converts the visual information into verbal sounds and rehearses the

verbal information until the task is accomplished. In the case of a distracted driver, the function of ARM is suppressed and it is not in a position to rehearse the information," the research team said.

The research team is now looking forward to join hands with road traffic officials and NGOs working to check road casualties.