



Can illiterates be given driving licenses?

Description

Introduction:

In May 2019, all illiterates have been banned from driving any sort of vehicle in Rajasthan. A single bench of the Rajasthan High Court has instructed the state government to withdraw the driving licenses of those who cannot read. The court has also instructed the transport authorities to issue proper instructions and guidelines and take the necessary action in cases where a driving license has been issued to someone who can't read and write. This has sparked a debate of whether the move is a step in the right direction or not.

Status Quo:

As of now, no educational qualification is required to obtain a private vehicle driving license. For commercial vehicles, as per the Motor Vehicles Act 1988, an 8th pass certificate is necessary to obtain a license. Besides, the person driving a vehicle carrying dangerous or hazardous goods should be able to read or write at least one Indian language as prescribed in the VIII Schedule of the Constitution, or English.

Should Illiterates be given Driving license?

Rajasthan HC has stated passed the law based on the premise that an illiterate person would be a safety hazard on the road. The driver would not be able to read road safety signs, construction-related symbols, warnings, etc.

To add to the concern that HC expressed, an illiterate person would also face troubles with documents (related to the vehicle) that need to be updated time and again. A literate person would also be able to understand the requirements of his/her vehicle by going through the instruction manual, which could greatly increase road safety. Traffic rules and road safety laws which keep on getting updated every now and then can only be understood by literate drivers. Illiterate drivers, on the other hand, by not knowing the laws and their rights, expose themselves to

unwanted harassment by the police or even law-suits.

Conclusion:

While all of the above concerns may look petty as compared to the loss of livelihood of hundreds but it will definitely help save at least a hundred lives every year. Road safety is treated very lightly in India. But, the statistics are alarming. One person dies every 4 minutes due to a road accident in India. More people die every year due to road accidents than the combined number of deaths in all the 5 wars India has fought. India loses 3% of its GDP due to road accidents. Keeping this in mind, any step taken to improve road safety in India should be highly appreciated.

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Your Turn...

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