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# **ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN INDIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

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## **Abstract**

Road traffic accidents have emerged as a public health challenge. Road accidents are increasing day by day and it is a real public issue. Government implemented many rules and regulations to prevent road accidents and the motor vehicle department provides many awareness classes to prevent accidents even though people are not aware of it. The number of lives lost in accidents. Injuries and death due to road traffic accidents are a major public health problem in our country. Due to road accidents, a number of people are killed and disabled. Road accidents which not only affect the travelers, but also its effects on the poor people, mostly the pedestrians, cyclists and passengers of buses. Over speeding, rash driving, violation of rules, failure to understand the signs, alcohol etc. are the mistakes and faults happening from the side of drivers. When it comes to pedestrians, their carelessness, illiteracy, disobeying the rules and regulations. The was majority of roads users harms the general rules of traffic and safety measures quite well, but accidents and breakdowns are caused, it's because of their carelessness Road accidents are one of the main causes of death in our society every year due to the increase in the population and number of vehicles in the community. The purpose of this paper is therefore to critically assess traffic accidents and their consequences.

## **Introduction:**

India has a high rate of road traffic accidents, with thousands of people dying and number of people getting injured every year. According to the ministry of road transport and highways, in 2020. Total number of accidents in India resulted in 1,51,113 deaths and 4,51,361 injuries in 4,39,859 accidents. The major causes of road traffic accidents in India are numerous and include factors such as speeding, reckless driving, overloading, poor infrastructure, inadequate road signage, and lack of traffic rules enforcement. Additionally, the increasing number of vehicles and less awareness among the public about road safety will create multiple problems.

Unscientific management in road construction also increases the depth of the problem, which leads to an increase in the death rate. People avoiding the traffic rules results in heavy loss not only to the family but also to the society.

In India nearly 1.5 lakh people die in a year, 1130 accidents and 422 deaths every day, 47 accidents and 18 deaths in every hour. In 2021 According to the RTA Survey Tamil Nadu had the highest number of accident (55,007) cases reported, followed by Madhya Pradesh with more than 48 thousand road accident cases reported. Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala show the greatest number of accidental deaths in Indian roadways. In Metropolitan cities carelessness of drivers and poor road construction is the major cause of accidents, Delhi accounts for the maximum number of accidents happening in India. Traffic collision is a major source of deaths, injuries and property damage every year in India. According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2021 report states that there were 155,622 fatalities, highest since 2014, out of which 69,240 deaths were due to two-wheelers. A study by IIT Delhi points 30% accidents and 36.6% deaths are reporting in 2% length of roads in India. The Government of India has taken a number of measures to tackle this problem, including implementing stricter traffic laws and penalties, introducing road safety education programs in schools, and improving road safety. road infrastructure. However, more needs to be done to reduce the number of road accidents in India and make the roads safer for all road users. The main causes of road accident deaths in India are speeding, reckless driving, drunk driving, overloading, poor road conditions, inappropriate traffic signs and lack of traffic. apply highway codes. Pedestrians and two-wheelers are particularly vulnerable to road accidents in India. There is still a long way to go to make India's roads safer and it is important that all road users are aware of their responsibilities and take the necessary precautions to prevent this from happening. prevent road accidents.

### **Review of Literature: Aditya Narayan Sinha (Pothole Deaths in India)<sup>1</sup>**

According to him, potholes are referred to as a very common thing and impacts which can be seen in every 1 kilometer in India. Potholes which have been formed by the force of water and abrasion. According to Mumbai Mirror Newspaper survey, 2018 mentioned that 26934 potholes are there in Mumbai metropolitan city. In road accidents more than 30% people die due to potholes. Accident incidents due to potholes are high. Potholes claimed 11,836 lives and

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<sup>1</sup> Aditya Narayan Sinha, "Pothole Deaths in India" BLJ Vol.1, Issue.3 2020

36,421 persons injured in India. Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of pothole deaths in India. Uttar Pradesh is followed by Maharashtra, then followed by Haryana, Gujarat, Delhi, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, and then others. Government and civil servants are equally responsible for the negligence done during the time of inception. Bad quality of roads is also responsible for pothole deaths. Law must be strengthened. Deaths are increasing every year, if not solved then it can be more dangerous.

### **Prof. Thokchoma Shantajit (Road Traffic Accidents in India: An overview)<sup>2</sup>**

Traffic accidents are the result of a combination of factors related to system components including roads, environment, vehicles and road users and how they interact with each other. It is necessary to emphasize the importance of the “Golden Hour” for timely treatment of accident victims to save injured people for both vehicle users and the community.

Medical/first aid facilities are required on highways and busy roads, as well as ambulances and trained paramedics to move and transport the injured to a nearby hospital for treatment. As a result, the country faces many problems and impacts on road accidents and road safety levels. It weighs heavily on the economy in addition to the mortality and morbidity associated with traffic accidents. According to him, traffic accidents are predictable and preventable. For this, it is necessary to understand the different factors that lead to RTA. Strict enforcement of traffic rules and harsh penalties won't solve the lingering problem. A change in the mindset of drivers and drivers, road users taking their own responsibilities will create a change. This requires strong political commitment and multi-pronged strategies to meet the current requirements and needs of the six Es for road safety such as education, technology (roads), engineering (roads), convenience, enforcement, urgent care, and enactment. We all have a role to play in preventing ATR. He also mentioned that traffic accidents kill nearly 1.3 million people each year and injure 20 to 50 million people worldwide at the same time.

India, as a rapidly developing country, has one of the highest rates of motorization growth, accompanied by an expansion of its road network and rapid urbanization.

According to the National Highway Authority survey, 2015, the total number of registered motor vehicles was 210,023,000, in the same year the length of the road was 54,72,144 km.

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<sup>2</sup> Prof. Thokchoma shantajit, “Road Traffic Accidents in India: an overview” IJCBR 4(4) 2018



This road network includes National Highway, Main Road, District Road, Rural Road and Village Road. At the same time, the composition of the population registered for cars includes two-wheelers (73.5%), followed by cars, jeeps and taxis (13.6%), commercial vehicles (4.4%), bus (1%) and other vehicles (7.5%). The result was 167 vehicles/thousand people, a sharp increase of 8 thousand people in 1981. The country's economic loss due to traffic accidents is 3.7% of GDP is a rising threat to human society. An important reason for ignoring traffic accidents in public health is the notion that collisions and injuries are random events. Such events are considered the inevitable outcome, it must be avoidable. They are considered to be possibly involuntary, unavoidable and unpredictable; an inevitable event.

### **Manisha Ruika (National statistics of road traffic accidents in India)<sup>3</sup>**

A bibliographic analysis was performed to document the injuries literature published in low- and middle-income countries, and also to quantify documents on the road Traffic accidents by country before and after the World Cup Road Safety and Health Day which was celebrated in April 2004. India, the second most populous country in the world, has the greatest number of accidents and deaths. The percentage changes rapidly in traffic accidents from the 2001-2007 period compared with the 2001-2004 period (Increased 30%) in India. According to him it must be more effective, injury prevention policies and Security in developing countries must be based on local evidence and research, and is designed to be consistent with observing social, political and economic circumstances in developed countries. As a result, strategies for strengthening research yourself must develop in parallel with the steps encouraging decision makers and practitioners to ask and use research evidence. Enhance and perform audience research health burden and impact, understand the risk, the factors, characteristics of the injury and the extent of impact of interventions through well-designed public measures medical and clinical research methods (trauma registry, surveillance programs, hospitals and population studies, etc.) is in urgent need. Health experts and their professional bodies through discipline must have an initiative for the same, with active participation. He also points out the effective need of proper management in controlling accident deaths.

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<sup>3</sup> Manisha Ruika, "National Statistics of road traffic accidents in India" JOTR 6(1) 2013

## **Saurabh Agrawal (A Study on Prevalence of Road Traffic Accidents and Its Risk Factors in Jhansi)<sup>4</sup>**

This study shows that the majority of victims are younger, less educated and workers by trade. Most RTAs are reported at night and in winter. This is due to poor visibility at night and fog in winter. In the study, the most common means associated with RTA were found. Among the risk factors, bad roads, poor lighting, speeding, overloading, and drinking are thought to be responsible for Road Traffic Accidents. Road Traffic Accidents ranks 1 in all causes of injury/accident related to death. Road accidents are the result of the interaction of many factors, some of which are the length of the road network, number of vehicles, population and compliance/enforcement of safety rules on the whole road. Traffic in each area is not well guided, people don't care about traffic rules is the major problem, and such things should be monitored and controlled by the government. In India, custom vehicles are on the rise at a similar growth rate. The current vehicle usage forecast shows a rather bad and unsustainable situation in terms of both traffic congestion and safety. The most important method to reduce accidents is to strictly apply the speed limit. The test for a driver's license must be more rigorous and infallible. The study showed that risk factors for road traffic accidents were observed. Most of the accidents occurred in winter (37.24%) and at night (34.47%). In this study, the sugar was faulty (19.68 percent) and the lighting was poor (18.54 percent) as a cause of accidents in most cases. Most of the victims (41.50%) were injured by speeding and followed by overloading the vehicle (40.46%). In high-income countries, speed contributes to about 30% of road deaths, while in some low- and middle-income countries speed is estimated to be the main cause of road deaths about half of all road crashes. In his research, he found that the majority of victims were young, uneducated, labour-intensive men in their occupations.

## **Ramachandran Arichandran (Fatal Road Accidents in Kerala (India): Characteristics, Causes and Remedial Measures)<sup>5</sup>**

### **Statement of Problem:**

Nation faces many problems due to accidental deaths. Nation always thinks about the safety of the people. Overspeed, improper management in road construction, absence of sign boards etc. may lead to very serious impacts on society. Careless driving and such dangerous things ruin

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<sup>4</sup> Saurabh Agrawal, "A Study on Prevalence of Road Traffic Accidents and Its Risk Factors in Jhansi" JEMDS 4(43) 2015

<sup>5</sup> Ramachandran Arichandran, "Fatal Road Accidents in Kerala (India): Characteristics, Causes and Remedial Measures" IJSR 3(11) 2014

people's lives and negatively affect all aspects of society.

### **Objectives:**

- To suggest the changes required in the Fatal Accident Act, 1855
- To suggest ways to make the implementation of the Fatal Accident Act more effective.

### **Research Questions:**

- Is the Fatal Accident Act of 1855 effectively implemented?
- What are the improvements needed in the Fatal Accident Act of 1855?

### **Hypothesis:**

Although the punishments of Accidental deaths have been made more rigorous, the implementation of this law is what the nation is lacking.

### **Research Methodology:**

Present study is only based on the primary data collected by the doctoral research and also the secondary data has been collected from different sources which include the official data as well as available literature on the subject from different journals, books, articles, newspapers, etc. Method of research is critical analysis.

### **Why the 1855 Act did get amended?**

The Fatal Accident Act 1855<sup>6</sup> provides for compensation for a person who suffered serious injury from a fault that can be sued or similar compensation for the family of the person who died in a fatal accident. The Act of 1976 allows claimants to be compensated for the death of a loved one if it can be shown that their death was caused by the negligence of another party obligated to care for them. The amendment Act modifies the Fatal Accident Act, 1855 to improve or provide for a minimum imprisonment for certain crimes in order to deter the real preparators.

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<sup>6</sup> The Fatal Accidents Act, 1855 (13 of 1855)

### **Finding**

Accidental deaths in India are a major cause of death. According to India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), a total of 1,34,516 accidental deaths were reported in India in 2019<sup>7</sup>. The leading causes of accidental death in India are traffic accidents, drowning, fires, falls and electric shocks. Road accidents are the most common cause of accidental death, accounting for more than 36% of all reported accidental deaths in India in 2019. Other leading causes of accidental death in India include:

\*Drowning (Drowning is a term used to describe the process of immersing a person's respiratory system in water or another liquid, making breathing difficult or impossible.): accounts for about 15% of all accidental deaths.

\*Fire related incidents (Fire accidents on roads can be very dangerous and pose a significant risk to the safety of drivers and passengers. Some common causes of fire accidents on road include: Vehicle malfunction, Electrical problems, Fuel leaks, Collisions, etc.): accounts for about 7% of all accidental deaths

\*Fall: accounts for about 6% of all accidental deaths.

\*Shockwave: accounts for about 5% of all accidental deaths.

It is important to note that these figures are based on reported cases only and may not accurately reflect the true number of accidental deaths in India. Furthermore, raising awareness and taking action towards preventing such accidents is essential to reduce the number of accidental deaths in the country.

### **Conclusion**

Road traffic accidents have emerged as a significant public health issue, resulting in substantial loss of life and property while profoundly affecting individuals, families, and the economy. Despite multiple initiatives undertaken by the government, including stringent traffic regulations, awareness campaigns, and road safety programs, the incidence of accidents persists in rising. The growing population, swift urban development, and increase in motor vehicles have exacerbated the situation. The examination of road accidents in India identifies crucial contributing factors, such as reckless driving, speeding, inadequate road infrastructure, lack of awareness among road users, and insufficient enforcement of traffic regulations.

A detailed analysis of road accidents shows that they are not merely a problem for vehicle

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<sup>7</sup> Road Accidents in India, MORTH 2019

operators but also disproportionately affect pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users. The repercussions of road accidents go beyond immediate deaths and injuries, resulting in lasting disabilities, financial strain on families, and considerable economic losses for the nation. With India experiencing one of the highest accident frequencies globally, effective tackling this issue necessitates a comprehensive strategy that includes improvements in infrastructure, policy reforms, and changes in behavior among road users.

One of the significant issues that lead to road accidents is the state of road infrastructure. Poorly constructed roads, insufficient signage, and the lack of pedestrian-friendly pathways render commuting dangerous. Potholes have become a serious danger, resulting in a significant number of fatalities each year. Research has shown that pothole-related incidents constitute a notable percentage of road deaths. The failure to maintain roads and ensure safe travel conditions has rendered road travel perilous for all users. It is essential for authorities to invest in quality road construction, routine maintenance, and effective road planning to minimize accidents attributed to inadequate infrastructure.

Moreover, reckless driving continues to be a primary factor in the escalation of accidents. Speeding, driving under the influence, distracted driving, and breaking traffic laws have led to a substantial loss of life. Numerous drivers disregard speed limits, traffic signals, and safety measures, which greatly enhances the risk of collisions. Likewise, the ignorance among pedestrians and two-wheeler riders also adds to the occurrence of accidents.

Jaywalking, crossing roads at non-designated spots, and riding without helmets or protective gear render pedestrians and motorcyclists particularly susceptible to fatal accidents.

Research suggests that road traffic accidents are avoidable if appropriate measures are appropriately enacted. Nations with lower accident rates have implemented stringent road safety regulations, enhanced their emergency response systems, and established public awareness campaigns that inform citizens about responsible road use. India must adopt a similar strategy by fortifying traffic law enforcement, escalating penalties for infractions, and improving driver education programs. The introduction of severe penalties for reckless driving, including increased fines and license suspensions, can serve as a deterrent to careless behaviors on the roads.



Another essential element of accident prevention is the "Golden Hour" principle, which highlights the significance of prompt medical aid after an accident. Numerous accident victims perish because of delays in obtaining medical treatment. Setting up well-equipped trauma centers, enhancing ambulance availability, and training first responders can greatly lower mortality rates. The government needs to guarantee that highways and areas prone to accidents have accessible emergency services to boost survival rates for victims.

Moreover, public awareness initiatives are vital in developing responsible road behavior. Educational institutions, universities, and workplaces should actively endorse road safety education, stressing the necessity of adhering to traffic regulations. Media outlets, social media promotions, and community involvement should be utilized to promote safer driving practices and pedestrian conduct. Individuals must accept personal responsibility for their road actions and place safety above convenience.

In summary, road traffic incidents in India represent a serious issue that demands immediate and ongoing action. Although government policies and enforcement efforts are crucial, making significant strides in accident reduction relies on the collaborative efforts of authorities, road users, and the public. Enhancing road infrastructure, applying more stringent laws, improving emergency medical response, and cultivating a responsible driving culture can help alleviate the concerning increase in road accidents. Only through a comprehensive approach can we establish safer roads, decrease fatalities, and safeguard lives from the devastating effects of traffic accidents.

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