

Road safety in South India a cause for worry

Five states account for nearly half of accidents in the country, shows recent report published by NIMHANS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

FIVE south Indian states — Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra — together account for 46.8 per cent of accidents in the country. This is indeed huge compared to the land area of the remaining 23 states.

Sourced from various government and independent, national and international reports and studies, NIMHANS, in collaboration with safety science company UL, on Friday released a summary report on road accidents to serve as a ready reckoner.

"This indicates that the South Indian states have expanding infrastructure. But this doesn't mean there are more roads or poorer roads here. It means there is increased motorisation and hence focus should be on road safety practices," said Dr G Gurturaj, HOD, Epidemiology, NIMHANS.

A large number of accidents and deaths occur on rural roads (that include most of the national and state highways) where road safety is yet to gain importance. Indian highways account for a 4.84 per cent of the total road length but contribute to half of road accidents and 63 per cent of road deaths in India, the report said.

"Based on the summary of available data from Indian studies, it can be concluded that pedestrians, two-wheeler riders/



Visitors view the road safety reports at NIMHANS on Friday | MANGALIA GADKAL

pillions and cyclists account for nearly 80 per cent of road deaths and injuries, which is in contrast to official reports due to fallacies in reporting practices," the report said.

A few studies conducted in India indicate that the number of deaths is likely to be higher by nearly 20 per cent while serious injuries are underreported by more than 50 per cent in official reports. As per national reports, only 22.1 per cent of accidents and 11.3 per cent of road deaths occurred in the five crore-plus cities in India in 2015 (Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, 2015).

Very few injured and seriously affected persons receive adequate trauma care and situation is worse in rural India. All severely injured, half of moderately in-

jured and at least 10 per cent of the mildly injured will have lifelong disabilities.

Gurturaj said, "Around a month back, the reporting mechanism was changed. The focus has to shift from impacting vehicle to 'who is impacted'."

"Before the law on helmets was introduced in 2006, less than 10 per cent were wearing helmets, which has now increased substantially," he said. He also advocated for full face helmets.



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Dr G Gurturaj, HOD, Epidemiology, NIMHANS

Two-wheeler riders at high risk in Karnataka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA accounted for 9 per cent of road accidents in India, seven per cent of road deaths and 11 per cent injuries. Of the reported fatalities, 40 per cent involved two-wheelers, 13pc four wheelers and 11pc were pedestrians.

Reporting mechanisms should shift their focus to the victim rather than the driver, experts said. What needs to be done is to establish a lead road safety agency; notify legislations on helmets, seat belts, drinking and driving, speeding, and use of cell phones; establish a dedicated road safety fund; mandate road safety audits for new and existing roads; create a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund; standardise, regulate and enforce vehicle safety requirements, they said.

"Since road safety is the shared responsibility of nearly 15-20 different ministries, implementing road safety programmes requires well-coordinated and integrated approaches at both national and state levels," said the report titled, 'Advancing Road Safety in India — Implementation is the key'.

"Observational studies undertaken by WHO Collaboration Centre at NIMHANS have revealed that use of helmets and seat belts is more prominent wherever there is police presence. So manpower should be increased. They are also controlled when checks are carried out in a visible manner," said Dr Gurturaj G, who anchored the study.

1,47,85,000

Total registered vehicles in Karnataka (in 2015)

45.9 **10,856**

Vehicle density (vehicle per km) Deaths in accidents

56,971

Road traffic injuries observations of nearly 14 lakh drivers

Major trauma care facilities

754

EMRI ambulances

8 **35**

Trauma care centres District hospitals

50%: Deaths of front car occupants prevented by use of seat belts

17%: Drivers who use seat belts in B'uru

6.5%: Drivers found using cell phones while driving in B'uru

Green House
blatant usage

Accidents: K'taka 2nd in south, says survey

BENGALURU: As many as 1.75 lakh people died in road accidents in 2015 in India while about 52.5 lakh were hospitalised, according to a report on road safety released on Friday at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (Nimhans).

Prepared by Nimhans and American Safety Certification Company UL, the report shows that the maximum number of accidents took place in Uttar Pradesh whereas Karnataka ranked fourth in the list. In South India, Tamil Nadu

ranked first whereas Karnataka stood second. Andhra Pradesh and Kerala were in the third and fourth positions respectively.

The report entitled 'Advancing Road Safety in India: Implementation is the Key' was released by Transport Minister R Ramalinga Reddy to mark the Fourth UN Global Road Safety Week.

Reddy said people's attitudes had to change. "Rules are there even in the Constitution but implementation is important. People should also obey the rules."

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'Better roads, safer vehicles, alert drivers can help reduce accidents'

DC CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU, MAY 12

The State has nothing to be proud of when it comes to road safety as the latest analytical report released by UL and NIMHANS on Friday stresses that the State ranks second in terms of road traffic accidents and fourth in terms of road deaths. Highest number of deaths in year 2015 was reported from the states of Uttar Pradesh (18407), Tamil Nadu (15642), Maharashtra (13686), Karnataka (10857) and Rajasthan (10510).

The latest official figures on the road accident cases in the State reveal 10856 road deaths in 2015, however, the real numbers are 20% more. "There is available research evidence which states that of the road deaths reported, real numbers are 20% more and



State Transport Minister R Ramalinga Reddy (Centre) unveiling the national level research report on road traffic titled 'Advancing Road Safety in India: Implementation is the Key' in Bengaluru on Friday

hence the real number for the State could be pinned at 13,028," reveals Dr G Gururaj, Head of WHO CC and Centre for public Health at NIMHANS and the author of national road safety report also highlights that NIMHANS witnesses some 80 cases of

severe road traffic accident cases. The report also revealed that 3,90,940 serious road accident injuries and 9,11,960 major injuries all of which go unreported. The five southern Indian states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra

together accounted for 46.8% of accidents. On Friday to mark the Fourth United Nations Global Road Safety Week (May 8-14), UL, a global safety science leader and National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS)

KARNATAKA FACTFILE	
Road Accidents	8.7%
Road Deaths	7.4%
Injuries in India	11.4%
Road Deaths (2011-15)	48763
Road Deaths (2015)	10856

released an exhaustive analytical study titled 'Advancing Road Safety in India: Implementation is the Key' which could be used as a reference document to aid multiple stakeholders in developing comprehensive mechanisms to address the road safety crisis currently afflicting the country. The pan-Indian study delves into the accident data sourced from various government and independent, national and international reports and studies. It also offers a state wise perspective to

STATES WITH HIGHEST DEATH TOLL

Uttar Pradesh	21,199
Tamil Nadu	18,770
Maharashtra	15,854

indicate differential burden of road traffic incidents. Speaking about reducing deaths, Dr Gururaj adds, "if the five pillars of safety namely, road safety management, safer road infrastructure, safer vehicles, safer road users and post crash care systems then we can reduce deaths by 30%-40%."

City's road crash mortality rate above national average

Experts hold that this number can be brought down only by instilling respect for road safety rules in the people

STAFF REPORTER

BENGALURU

The city has a lot of ground to cover to reduce deaths by road accidents. In 2015, the road crash mortality rate in Bengaluru was 14 per 1 lakh population, which was higher than the national average of 12 per 1 lakh population, according to a study released on Friday. The major challenge is instilling respect for road safety rules, experts said.

The Advancing Road Safety in India: Implementation is Key' report was authored by G. Gurturaj and Gautam M.S. of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) in collaboration with UL, a global independent safety science company. It carries data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) as well as several published and unpublished surveys, and studies carried out across the country

Highlights of the report

Challenges

- Absence of a lead coordinating agency
- Absence of a well-defined road safety action plan at national and State levels
- Poor level of enforcement of rules amidst limited resources
- Absence of community engagement and participation
- Lack of reliable data systems to guide evidence-based action in road safety
- Greater emphasis on information to road users to be safe rather than measures to make them safe

Solutions

- Presence of a lead agency
- Well-drafted national road safety action plan
- Setting road safety targets at the national and State levels
- Mandatory road safety audits
- Measures that restrict speed
- Traffic separation

Karnataka highlights

● Deaths (2011-2015)

13,028

● Serious injuries

3.90 lakh

2015 (Independent estimates)

● Deaths

3.90 lakh

● Injuries

9.11 lakh

48,763

to present a complete picture of the road safety scenario.

People in the 25-34 age group are at maximum risk of dying in road accidents, but the number of deaths begins to rise from the 14-15 age

group. "Many students buy bikes when they join college. They can be taught road safety in college," suggests

R.A. Venkiaharam, vice-president, Public Safety Mission, UL, India.

Another issue highlighted is 'where people die,' to improve response systems. In Bengaluru, nearly 40% of deaths occur at or near crash sites. Another 20% occur in transit to a hospital; nearly half the victims die in hospital or later. The report recommends strengthening pre-hospital systems, focusing on trauma care at the site.

Improving data gathering

Data gathering is still at a basic stage, as methods employed by the NCRB do not accurately reflect the state of accidents and their victims, a new study has claimed. "For example, in NCRB data, accidents related to pedestrians, motorists on two-wheeler and people on bicycles are under-reported. The data looks at accidents in terms of vehicles involved and not the victims," said G. Gurturaj, one of the authors of the study.

Karnataka ranks second in number of road accidents

STAFF REPORTER

BENGALURU

In Karnataka, which ranked second in number of road accidents and fourth in number of fatalities in road accidents in 2015, there is an immediate need for adoption of road safety rules by motorists.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy said.

'No implementation'

Road accidents are on the rise in the State contrary to its objective of reducing them by 50% (from 2010 figures) by 2020. "We have rules but implementation is

lagging due to lack of support from motorists. People must understand that the government frames safety rules to help motorists and not to cause trouble."

He expects the Motor Vehicle Amendment Bill, pending before the Rajya Sabha, to be instrumental in bringing down the number of accidents.

The report recommends establishment of a lead road safety agency at the National and State levels that would be supported with a road safety action plan.