

A ROAD SHOCK

Road safety implementation is extremely poor in India, says study released by Nimhans



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The five southern Indian states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra together accounted for 46.8% of accidents, says a study released here on Friday at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, titled 'Advancing Road Safety in India. The study also points out that there is an immediate need for experts to collate accident data due to wrong reporting.

Dr G Gururaj, Head of WHO CC and Centre for Public Health at NIMHANS as well as the author of the national road safety reports mentioned that "Road safety in India has been a neglected area amidst rapid developmental policies and programmes and faces multiple challenges in implementation. Essentially, road safety is science and requires a scientific approach to address the problem that needs to move beyond simplistic answers. Advancing road safety needs a framework based on good quality data that should bring multiple stakeholders to implement solutions in a convergent manner with systematic monitoring and evaluation of programmes and interventions."

The report examines the impact of rapid socio-economic

development and motorization without accompanying prioritization to road safety. It analyzes conflicting data points and under reporting from varied sources, which occur on account of investigation by less trained personnel. The data-laden study also scrutinizes the patterns of road-related fatalities and injuries across a plethora of criteria - gender, type of road user, economic background of the victim and location, both urban and rural.

Lack of safety on Indian roads, may we say, is tantamount to a public emergency but remedial action is on

- RA VENKITACHALAM, V-P, UL

Ramalinga Reddy, minister for transport, Karnataka, said, "The government is striving hard to implement road safety in the state, but the onus is also on road users. If everything is to be enforced through police and fines, then implementation ought to be poor. People need to be more aware about safety as motorized transport increases in the country."

Inferring that the complexity of the road safety problem in India is an amalgamation of varied macro and micro factors, the report lays bare the challenges in

addressing the country's alarming rate of road traffic incidents - inefficiency in implementation of relevant laws owing to divided responsibility between central and state governments across various ministries.

The lack of a coherent data collection system that combines police and hospital records, inadequacy of public infrastructure like well-maintained roads and trauma centres and the absence of in-depth crash analysis that results in ineffective, ad-hoc measures to curb accidents, among other reasons.

RA Venkitachalam, Vice-President, Public Safety, UL, said, "It would not be an exaggeration to state that the lack of safety on Indian roads is tantamount to a public emergency. With the recent passage of the Motor Vehicles Bill in the Lok Sabha, there is a renewed vigour on part of the government to gear the country toward safer roads."

"However, the situation cannot be rectified by one agency alone - multiple stakeholders, from the government, corporates, auto manufacturers, law enforcement, healthcare professionals, educational institutions and road safety experts need to collaborate on a scientific level to evolve sustainable solution for the problem. At UL, we have always believed in the efficacy of applying science to solve any safety issue," he added.

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

■ Based on a summary of available data from Indian studies, it can be concluded that pedestrians (30 - 40%), two-wheeler riders/ pillioners (30 - 40%) and cyclists (approximately 10%) account for nearly 80% of road deaths and injuries, which is in contrast with official reports due to fallacies in reporting practices.

■ A few Indian studies indicate the number of deaths is likely to be higher by nearly 20%, while serious injuries are underreported by more than 50% as compared to official reports.

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■ As per national reports, only 22.1% of accidents and 11.3% of road deaths occurred in the 50 million-plus cities in India in 2015. Thus, it is clear that a large number of road crashes and deaths occur on rural roads (that also include most of the national and state highways) where road safety is yet to gain prominence.

■ Indian Highways (54,72,144 km in length) account for 4.84% of global road length, but contribute to half (52.4%) of road accidents and 63% of global road deaths.

■ Very few injured and seriously affected persons receive adequate trauma care and situation is worse in rural India.

■ Irrespective of data source, in more specific terms, 100% of the severely injured, 50% of moderately injured, and 10-20% of the mildly injured may have lifelong disabilities

To make Indian roads safer, firstly, commuters should follow traffic rules. 70 to 80% of accidents happen due to drivers. The procedure of providing licences should be strengthened as well.

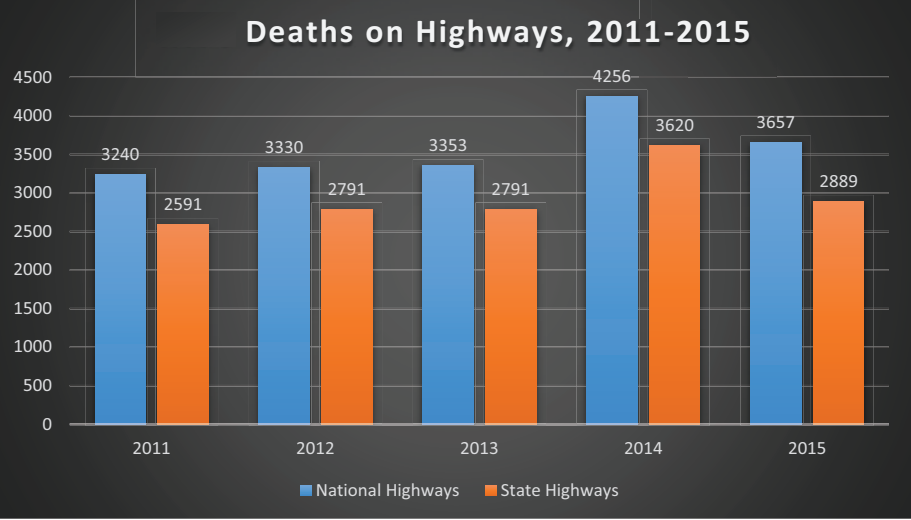
- R HITHENDRA, ADDL CP (TRAFFIC)

Road safety implementation is poor in India. It can be tackled by moulding driver behaviour, which can be enforced by having stricter laws for issuing licences. Also, engineers should follow basics

- ASHISH VERMA, IISC FACULTY

In India, the number of road accidents is high. In cities, we wear helmets and follow certain rules. In rural parts, people don't wear helmets and 2-3 people are seen on one bike. Rules are hardly observed

- BASAVARAJ S KYAVATER, ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

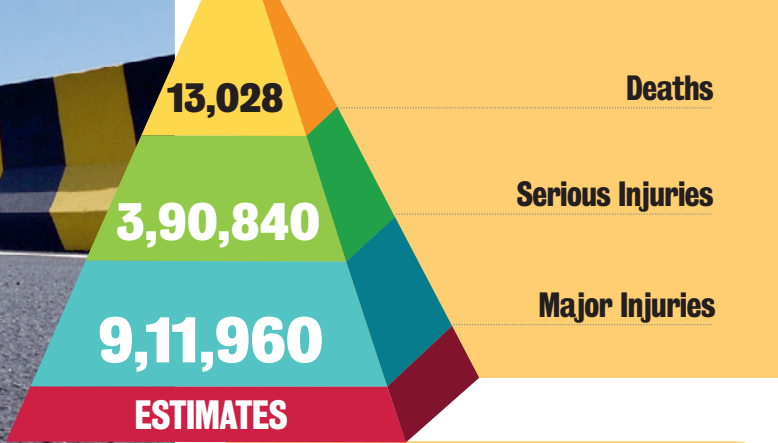


KARNATAKA

⇒ accounts for 8.7% of road accidents; 7.4% of road deaths; 11.4% of injuries in India

⇒ saw 48,763 road deaths between 2011 and 2015

recorded 10,856 road deaths in 2015 as per govt reports



Percentage share of total registered vehicles	Category	Percentage share of reported fatalities based on road user category
		11.10
		1.70
Two-wheelers		72.00
		40.10
		4.30
Taxi, Car, Jeep		13.50
		13.20
Buses (Bus+Mini bus)		3.10
		7.70
Trucks, Goods Vehicles		4.10
		6.80
Other MVs		8.20
	OTHER MVs	9.90
	OTHERs	5.10

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population (Census 2011)	6,11,30,704
No. of Districts	30
No. of Cities (Million +)	1
Literacy Rate (Census 2011)	75.30%
Per capita income (2013-14)	₹84,709

	Population %	Road Deaths %
Rural	61.43	7,518 (69.20)
Urban	38.50	3,338 (30.80)
Population < 18 years	35.70	394 (3.60)
Population > 65 Years	6	674 (6.20)
Males	50.90	9,528 (81.70)
Females	49.10	1,333 (12.30)

ROAD TRANSPORT

Total registered vehicles (2015)	1,47,85,000
Vehicle density (vehicles per km)	45.90

Road Network (2015)	Length (Kms)	Deaths (%)
Total road network	3,21,808	10,856
National Highways	6,432	3,657 (33.70)
State Highways	19,721	2,889 (26.60)
Other Roads	2,95,655	4,310 (39.70)

ROAD TRAFFIC DEATHS (2015)

Proportional mortality ratio	2.50%
Accident severity (deaths/100 accidents)	24.70

	Deaths	RTIs
Numbers	10,856	56,971
Rate per 1,00,000 population	17.60	92.20
Rate per 10,000 vehicles	7.30	38.50
Road deaths on highways	60.29	54.55

MAJOR TRAUMA CARE FACILITIES

Number of ambulances (EMRI only)	754
Number of district hospitals	35
Trauma care centres	8
Medical college hospitals	50



ADITYA MAGAL

NOTES FROM THE 560

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Our Judicial System is in the news and for contrasting reasons. The Supreme Court upheld the death sentence in the Nirbhaya case. After the verdict, Nirbhaya's parents were interviewed. Her mother said that 'Justice has been delayed

but not denied'. The circumstances and consequences of one night in the December of 2012 led to the shocking rape and tragic murder of a 23-year-old girl. Rightly so, the Supreme Court upheld the death sentence for the accused, now convicted. The case has

DAY OF JUSTICE

fallen under the 'Rarest of Rarest' category.

It has taken four years for Nirbhaya's parents to get the best justice the country can offer, which is after the juvenile involved in the case was let off on the technicality that he had not reached adulthood. While the law has since been amended, it cannot be retrospectively applied. That is a tragedy of one type and a shame of another. This, after the whole set of events since that night in December four

years ago, has been one monumental series of tragedies and shame. It has taken national outrage and media attention to jolt the government and judiciary into acting quickly on this case. And despite the 'quick' path, it has still taken 4+ years to get this far. In the case of Bilkis Bano, it has taken 15 years and though one may argue that the circumstances of the crime were similarly horrific to Nirbhaya's, the court has erred, I think, by not upholding the death penalty,

choosing instead to convict the accused to life imprisonment.

When it comes to dealing with rape and molestation cases against women and children, India has a definite problem - from pretty much every aspect, be it societally, law-wise, order-wise and judiciary-wise; and this is in addition to the problems that already plague the system when it comes to other offences. Bangalore Mirror was at the frontline when mass molesta-

Justice takes an awfully long time to be served in India. The system has been compromised such that relief is available only to the rich and powerful

tion of women occurred during the start of this year on New Year's in the Brigade Road area. Despite a heavy police presence, women were molested. This is not just a case of mass molestation but also mass escape. These molesters

have escaped because the police have not been able to find and capture most of them and bring them to book. Going by the track record of the cops, they never will. This means that those same people now roam the streets of the city as if nothing has happened.

Justice takes an awfully long time to be served and that too, if one is fortunate. The justice system has been so compromised that relief is available only to the rich and political class. It serves delay to others. It's more like the Bellandur lake - with no remedy in sight.

(The author is a stocks guy by profession)