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Issues and Challenges of Road Accidents in India: A State wise Analysis

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Abstract – Road traffic accidents deaths and injuries occur worldwide. In the last decade alone, India lost 1.3 million people to avertable road accident and another 5.3 million have been left disabled for life. Road traffic accident (RTA) is one of the major escapable public health problems and is on the rise which can be attributed to increase in the number of vehicles and lifestyle changes and risky attitudes. Road deaths in India are publicly evident, while road safety is professionally lacking and politically missing. The objective of the study is to help produce designs and roads that reduce the number and severity of crashes and to reduce likelihoods of accidents in India by providing an overview of the whole situation of fatal road accidents in India.

Keywords: Road Accident, Traffic, India, Road Safety, Road Deaths

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INTRODUCTION

Traffic accidents have now earned India a uncertain distinction; with nearly 150,000 deaths annually, the country has overtaken China to top the world in road fatalities. India is the only country in the world which faces more than 17 fatalities and 56 injuries every hour as a consequence of road crashes, which is increasing day by day. While in many developed and developing countries including China, the situation is generally improving, India faces a worsening situation. If the trend continues, the total number of road traffic deaths in India would increase enormously.

The main aim of this study is to analyze the road traffic accidents in India at national, state, and metropolitan city level. Focus would be to identify the major road safety issues and discuss countermeasures that would have potential to address the specific road safety problems. The Primary source of data for the study is Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India, 2001 - 2016 published by the National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi.

Fatalities and injuries resulting from road traffic accidents are a major and growing public health problem in India. Road traffic accident (RTA(s)) is one of the major preventable public health problems and is on the rise which can be accredited to increase in the number of vehicles, risky attitudes and lifestyle changes. In low and middle income countries (LMIC's) mortality due to RTA is projected to rise by 83% provided strict measures are not taken. Every week nearly 2,899 people get killed and 9,512 get injured due to traffic accidents. In 2016, latest year for which data is available, 1,50,785 people died and 4,94,624 people got injured due to road accidents in India.

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LMIC's account for 91% of the global mortality due to RTA although these countries have only about 50% of the world's vehicles[1].

RTA is defined as, ''An event that occurs on a way or street open to public traffic; resulting in one or more persons being injured or killed, where at least one moving vehicle is involved". "A collision between vehicles and pedestrians, animals, and geographical or architectural obstacles can be also termed as RTA" (Mohan, 2006).

According to "National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs", RTA accounted for about one third of all unnatural causes of accidental deaths in the year 2016. Around 4,80,652 RTAs were reported in the same year. Mortality due to RTA has declined by 1.2% during the year 2016 in comparison to year 2015. Globally, nearly 1.2 million people die each year due to RTA. Injuries account for 2.1 % of global deaths due to it . As stated by

Deutsche Welle report 'India has the highest number of road accidents in the world' as well as highest number of deaths due to it. Every year about 130,000 deaths are reported due to RTA in India which accounts for 6% of the global burden, though it has only 1% of the vehicles globally. When compared to developed nations, the numbers of RTAs in India were three times higher. It has overtaken even the most populous China. Experts caution that the actual estimate of mortality as well as injuries due to RTA could be much higher than what is actually reported, which could be because of underreporting.

The road accidents in india contributes 40 – 50 percent of total un-natural deaths. Here is a table which indicates this.

Table. 1

Year	Traffic accidents	Total	Percentage Traffic accidents
2001	99516	234368	**42.46**
2002	99772	241213	**41.36**
2003	102951	244671	**42.08**
2004	111794	258326	**43.28**
2005	118265	271760	**43.52**
2006	131652	293202	**44.90**
2007	140560	315641	**44.53**
2008	144587	318271	**45.43**
2009	152689	334766	**45.61**
2010	161736	359583	**44.98**
2011	165072	367194	**44.95**
2012	168301	372022	**45.24**
2013	166506	377758	**44.08**
2014	169107	377758	**44.77**
2015	177423	336050	**52.80**

Source: 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' Report 2016, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs.

As Table 1 indicates that of traffic accidents are the main cause of un-natural accidental deaths, as 40 – 50 percent of un-natural deaths are caused by traffic accidents.

Table 2. State wise Number of Deaths in Traffic accidents by Year

State/U.T.	Number of Deaths in Traffic accidents by Year						
	2009	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Uttar Pradesh	18176	19222	18622	18745	19639	20653	23219
Maharashtra	18018	19087	18704	19092	18270	18574	18404
Tamil Nadu	15586	17258	17287	18300	17534	17023	17376
Madhya Pradesh	9672	10400	9935	10771	10821	11312	11832
Karnataka	10163	11158	10637	10810	10318	10469	11754
Rajasthan	9442	9508	9568	9883	10068	10958	11205
Andhra Pradesh	15922	17230	17206	17669	17408	9377	9698
Gujarat	8014	8464	9119	8988	8752	9048	9448
West Bengal	7639	8117	8498	8865	8631	9292	9380
Telangana						7979	8263
Bihar	5587	5950	6927	6717	6800	5911	7407
Haryana	6011	6201	5933	5882	5885	6255	6332
Punjab	3240	3096	5848	5760	5565	5644	5810
Chhattisgarh	3707	4068	4180	3723	4097	4649	4613
Odisha	3996	4436	4220	4150	4509	4299	4587
Kerala	4322	4443	4586	4830	4734	4413	4528
Jharkhand	2692	2429	2675	3114	3146	2955	3131
Assam	2499	2498	2854	2821	2906	3212	3058
Himachal Pradesh	1127	1119	1110	1123	1079	1403	1096
Uttarakhand	934	951	983	922	825	562	1063
Jammu & Kashmir	1228	1047	1210	1485	1050	1030	984
Goa	364	397	380	376	310	332	361
Meghalaya	193	184	229	213	170	171	205
Arunachal Pradesh	125	139	126	136	155	112	178
Tripura	242	244	245	272	226	188	158
Manipur	125	153	156	158	165	167	129
Sikkim	87	71	106	44	68	62	75
Mizoram	63	82	81	77	97	93	65
Nagaland	50	44	39	56	40	32	56
State:							
Delhi	2978	3245	3132	2858	2757	2497	2522
Puduchery	223	245	239	240	239	207	250
Chandigarh	171	138	136	114	122	131	129
D. & N. Haveli	45	62	63	53	49	59	42
Daman & Diu	13	23	21	29	31	15	42
A. & N.Islands	33	27	17	25	40	23	23
Lakshadweep	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' Report 2016, National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs.

With the help of table two we can understand that the maximum number of deaths were occurred in Uttar Paradesh.

CONCLUSION:

Road safety research in the Region is piecemeal, fragmented, not continuous and disconnected. The current status of research does not provide answers to the problem and requires innovative approaches and solutions in each country. There is no national road safety research agenda in any Member State of the Region. There is a severe shortage of dedicated road safety research institutions, trained human resources, funding and training programmes, despite the increasing number of deaths and injuries on the roads. Collaborative mechanisms to translate research into policies and action programmes are very poor and decisions made are unscientific and ad hoc in nature.

There is a need for strategic research to focus on the five pillars of road safety in the Region as specified in the decadal action plans. Research should focus on better understanding on the contribution of roads, vehicles and human behaviour along with post-crash elements. Post-crash care, in terms of availability, accessibility and affordability needs to be examined in the context of huge social and economic diversities. Road safety management needs to be systematic and scientific, based on a critical understanding of barriers and challenges in each country. Road safety research is required from health, transport, road engineering, police and other partners for education, engineering, enforcement and emergency care. Research should extend beyond descriptive studies to identify and modify risk factors in different traffic environments and populations. Research in a number of these areas needs to be strengthened by governments, international organizations, the vehicle industry and others with institutional mechanisms. Improving human resources, funding, and coordination along with interdisciplinary research should be addressed in all Member States. Most importantly, research information should be applied for interventions, programmes and policies to reduce deaths and injuries on the roads.

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