



Road Accidents in India

Why in News

Recently, the **Minister of Road Transport and Highways** has informed in a written reply to the [Lok Sabha](#) about the death due to Road Accident in India.

- The Minister also informed that the ministry has **issued guidelines for improving the road safety** through road safety audits at all stages (design stage, construction stage and Operation & Management stage) by **engaging independent road safety experts**.

Key Points

▪ Road Accidents:

◦ Related Data:

- Road Accidents **killed as many as 47,984 people on National Highways (NHs)**, including on expressways, during 2020 and **53,872 people killed in 2019**.
- Globally, road accidents account for **1.3 million deaths and 50 million injuries**. Of this, **India's contribution to the fatalities is 11%**.

◦ Major Causes:

- The **major causes of the accidents on the NHs** were vehicle design and condition, road engineering, speeding, drunken driving/ consumption of alcohol and drugs, driving on the wrong side, jumping the red light, use of mobile phones, etc.

▪ Impact of Road Accidents:

◦ Economic:

- **India's socio-economic cost of road traffic accidents** for the year 2019 was in the range of USD15.71 billion to USD38.81 billion, which amounts to 0.55–1.35% of the [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#).

◦ Social:

• Burden on Households:

- At the individual level, **road crash injuries and deaths impose a severe financial burden** and push entire (non-poor) households into poverty and the already poor into debt.
- Every road accident death causes depletion of nearly seven months' household income in poor families, and pushes the kin of victims in a cycle of poverty and debt.

• Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs):

- VRUs **bear a disproportionately large burden of road crashes** and account for more than half of all road crash deaths and serious injuries in the country.

- It is often the poor, **especially male road-users of working age**, that constitute the category of VRUs.
 - Daily wage workers and workers employed as casual labourers in informal activities are more prone to be defined as vulnerable compared to workers engaged in regular activities.
- In India, where **VRUs are forced to share space with other less vulnerable road users**, the income level of an individual has a direct bearing on the mode of transport used.
- **Gender Specific Impact:**
 - **Women in the families of victims bore the burden across poor** and rich households, often taking up extra work, assuming greater responsibilities, and performing caregiving activities.
 - **About 50% of women were severely affected** by the decline in their household income after a crash.
 - **About 40% of women reported a change in their working patterns post-accident**, while around 11% reported taking up extra work to deal with the financial crisis.
- **Rural-Urban Divide:**
 - The **income decline for low-income rural households (56%)** was the most severe compared to low-income urban (29.5%) and high-income rural households (39.5%).

▪ **Related Initiatives:**

◦ **World:**

• **Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety (2015):**

- The [declaration](#) was signed at the second Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety held in Brazil. **India is a signatory** to the Declaration.
- The countries plan to achieve the [Sustainable Development Goal 3.6](#) i.e. to half the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030.

• **UN Global Road Safety Week:**

- It is celebrated every two years, the **fifth edition (held from 6-12 May 2019)** highlighted the need for strong leadership for road safety.

• **The International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) :**

- It is a registered charity dedicated to saving lives through safer roads.

◦ **India:**

• **Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, 2019:**

- The [Act](#) hikes the penalties for traffic violations, defective vehicles, juvenile driving, etc.
- It provides for a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, which would provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India for certain types of accidents.
- It also provides for a National Road Safety Board, to be created by the Central Government through a notification.
- It also provides for the protection of good samaritans.

• **The Carriage by Road Act, 2007:**

- The **Act provides for the regulation of common carriers**, limiting their liability and declaration of value of goods delivered to them to determine

their liability for loss of, or damage to, such goods occasioned by the negligence or criminal acts of themselves, their servants or agents and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

- **The Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2000:**

- The Act provides the **control of land within the National Highways**, right of way and traffic moving on the National Highways and also for removal of unauthorised occupation thereon.

- **The National Highways Authority of India Act, 1998:**

- The **Act provides for the constitution of an authority** for the development, maintenance and management of NHs and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Way Forward

- The safety of roads **needs to be seen as a public health issue rather than a transportation issue.**
 - There is a **need to focus on the behavioral change in society now.** Road safety should be dealt with in a mission mode.
- The **design of roads needs to be thoroughly audited** before any action regarding the same takes place.
- Road safety **needs to be assured from the mobility point of view as well**, how to move goods and ourselves in a better, faster and safer way.
- The **vulnerable population of the society should be given top priority** while ensuring the safety regarding road accidents.
 - The road designing should be done in such a way that the most vulnerable user is safe, eventually making the better protected ones safe as well.

[Source: IE](#)

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/road-accidents-in-india-3>