Global Status Report on Road Safety: WHO

World Health Organization (WHO) has released the Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018.

Key Points

- The report highlights that road traffic deaths are rising, with 1.35 million deaths in 2016 globally.
- Road Accidents are the eighth leading cause of death for all age groups surpassing HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and diarrhoeal diseases.
- The road traffic deaths rates are highest in Africa (26.6 per 100 000 population) and lowest in Europe (9.3 per 100 000 population).
- However, the rates of death relative to the size of the world's population has stabilized in recent years.
- Progress is attributed to better legislation around key risks such as **speeding, drinking and driving, and failing to use seat-belts, motorcycle helmets and child restraints, safer infrastructure like sidewalks, dedicated lanes for cyclists, motorcyclists, and improved vehicle standards.**
- The progress has not occurred at a pace fast enough to compensate for the rising population and rapid motorization of transport taking place in many parts of the world.

Road Accidents in India

- The trend in India shows that deaths have been increasing since 2007 even though India has put in place most of the rules needed to protect people.
- The report highlights India as an example of the implementation of seven or eight of the priority United Nations vehicle safety standards.
- Cities in India have reduced traffic crashes, and through media campaigns and stronger enforcement, more cities have cut drink driving.
- Despite this, India reported more than 150,000 deaths in 2016.
- There is a need to take a multi-sectoral approach to tackle road crashes and deaths. **Better infrastructure that can allow safer travel, better vehicles, improved intervention and enforcement of laws and a health system that can take care of accident victims are the need of the hour.**
- **Vehicle Safety Standards in India**
    - In 2014, crash tests carried out by the Global New Car Assessment Programme (NCAP) revealed that some of India's top-selling car models have failed the UN's frontal impact crash test.
    - Global NCAP tests at a higher speed resulted in zero-star ratings for Indian cars indicating a high risk of fatal or serious injury.
    - In 2015 the Indian government announced the application of new regulations consistent with the UN standards for front and side impact and also pedestrian protection.
    - For new car models, the use of front and side crash tests came into force from October 2017 and will apply to all new cars from October 2019.
    - The pedestrian protection regulation for new models came into force from October 2018 and will apply to all new cars from October 2020.
    - In addition, new cars are required to have airbags fitted as standard and to have a speed warning device above 80 km/h.

Recommendations

- **Safe Roads:** Safety consideration during the planning, design, and operation of roads, contributes to reducing road traffic deaths and injuries
- **Safe Vehicles:** Vehicle safety features such as electronic stability control and advanced braking make a substantial contribution to reducing road traffic deaths and injuries.
- **Behavioral Changes:** Increasing motorcycle helmet use, increasing seat-belt uses and increasing child restraint use.
- **Post Crash Care:** Simple and affordable post-crash care interventions can save lives. Effective care for the injured requires timely care at the scene, prompt transport to appropriate emergency and surgical care at the hospital, and early access to rehabilitation services.
- **Role of bystanders:** Bystanders play a major role in post-crash care. They contribute by activating the emergency care system and taking simple, potentially life-saving actions until professional help is available.

Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety

- The declaration was signed at the Second Global High-Level conference on Road Safety held in Brazil.
- Through the Brasilia Declaration Countries plan to achieve **the Sustainable Development Goal 3.6: By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.**
- United Nations has also declared **2010-2020 as the decade of action for Road Safety.**
- The main points of the Brasilia Declaration are:
    - Countries should form transport policies in order to favor more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and using public transport.
    - It highlights strategies to ensure the safety of all road users,
        - by improving laws and enforcement;
        - making roads safer through infrastructural modifications;
        - ensuring that vehicles are equipped with life-saving technologies;
        - and enhancing emergency trauma care systems.

The International Road Assessment Programme(iRAP)

- The International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) is a registered charity dedicated to saving lives through safer roads.

Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan Committee

- Supreme Court had set up the three-member KS Radhakrishnan panel on road safety in April 2014.
- The main recommendation of the committee was
    - Ban on the sale of alcohol on highways (both state and national) to restrain drunk driving.
    - The states were directed to implement laws on wearing helmets.
    - Audit of road safety to be implemented by states to ensure the safety standards in the design, construction, and maintenance of roads.
    - The committee stressed the importance of creating awareness among people on road safety rules.

Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2016

- It proposes to create a National Register for Driving Licence and a National Register for Vehicle registration through **“Vahan” and “Sarathi” web portals.** This is in order to smoothen the process of registration and licensing.
- It proposes alterations in vehicles, in order to make them suitable for specially-abled people.
- 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 provides for a **National Road Safety Board,** to be created by the Central Government through a notification. The Board will provide advice to the Central and State Governments on all aspects of road safety and traffic management.

- Contractors, consultants, and civic agencies will be accountable for faulty design, construction or poor maintenance of roads leading to accidents. Those found guilty would be penalized up to Rs 1 lakh.
- The bill also provides for the protection of good samaritans.

Ministry’s Report on Road Accidents in India

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