

6. Report On Road Accidents – Reports

Rural Nashik, Pune report most severe road accidents A joint report by MoRTH and SaveLIFE Foundation reveals that 59% of road fatalities in India are due to road engineering defects rather than traffic violations, with UP and Tamil Nadu reporting high severity. India continues to rank first globally in road deaths, necessitating urgent engineering audits, stricter enforcement, and adherence to the Brasilia Declaration targets.

Introduction

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in collaboration with the NGO SaveLIFE Foundation has released a joint report focusing on India's top 100 districts regarding the severity of road accident fatalities. The report highlights critical data points on accident locations, causes, and the urgent need for engineering and enforcement reforms.

1. Major Findings of the Report

Geographic Distribution of Fatalities

Uttar Pradesh (UP)– Accounted for the majority of the top 20 districts with the highest fatalities.

State-wise "Severe" Districts

- a. Tamil Nadu– 19 districts.
- b. Maharashtra– 11 districts.
- c. Karnataka– 9 districts.
- d. Rajasthan– 8 districts.

Concentration of Accidents

Location Specificity– Most accidents are not random but concentrated in known locations such as specific road stretches, crash-prone spots (black spots), and specific police station areas.

Highway vs. non-highway – 63% of total road crash fatalities occur outside of National Highways. However, 54% of all fatalities were reported specifically on 18 target corridors belonging to the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) and state Public Works Departments (PWD).

Factors Responsible for Fatalities

Role of Road Engineering– A significant 59% of all road accident fatalities do not involve any traffic violation. This strongly indicates that road engineering defects (poor design, lack of signage, potholes) are one of the biggest contributory factors to deaths.

Types of Crashes– Rear-end collisions, head-on collisions, and pedestrian crashes collectively accounted for 72% of all fatalities.

Role of Traffic Violations–

- a. Speeding– 19% of deaths.
- b. Rash Driving– 7% of deaths.
- c. Dangerous Overtaking– 3% of deaths.

2. Key Recommendations

Engineering Audits– NHAI and state PWDs must conduct a comprehensive Road Safety Survey on each corridor to identify and rectify engineering issues.

Infrastructure and Enforcement

Police Stations– Upgrade critical police stations with adequate manpower to undertake effective enforcement activities.

Emergency Care– Audit all 108 ambulances to ensure compliance with the National Ambulance Code.

Coordination and Funding – Ensure better coordination among key departments– Police, Hospitals, and Road Agencies. Align the current budget to focus on engineering improvements, enforcement resources, and health capacity.

3. Road Accidents in India- A Global Perspective

Global Standing

Rank- India ranks first globally in the number of annual road accident fatalities.

Comparison- India's numbers significantly surpass the next highest countries-

- China- Accounts for only 36% of India's total road deaths.
- United States- Accounts for only 25% of India's total road deaths.

Current Statistics (2024 Data)

- Total Fatalities- Rose by 2.3% to over 1.77 lakh.
- Daily Average- Approximately 485 persons die every day in road accidents in India.

Fatality Rate Comparison (World Road Statistics 2024)

Country	Fatality Rate (per lakh population)
China	4.3
India	11.89
USA	12.76

(Note- While the USA has a higher rate per capita due to high vehicle ownership, India's absolute numbers and the rate relative to vehicle density are alarming.)

4. International Commitments

Decade of Action - In September 2020, the UN General Assembly launched the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030.

Goal- To reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by at least 50% by 2030.

Brasilia Declaration - Adopted at the 2nd Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety in Brazil.

Goal- Signatories pledged to halve road crash fatalities by 2020 (later extended in alignment with SDGs).

India's Stance- India was among the initial 100+ countries to sign the declaration in 2015, committing to SDG 3.6.

5. Government Initiatives for Road Safety

Policy Framework

National Road Safety Policy (2010)- Focuses on infrastructure, enforcement, emergency services, awareness, and post-crash care.

Technological Interventions

e-DAR (Electronic Detailed Accident Report) / iRAD (Integrated Road Accident Database)- A centralized system for reporting, managing, and analyzing accident data to enable evidence-based interventions.

Speedy Assistance to Victims

- Good Samaritan Award- Cash reward of ₹25,000 for those helping victims.
- Compensation- Increased to ₹5 lakh for death and ₹2.5 lakh for grievous hurt.
- Hit-and-Run Cases- Enhanced compensation of ₹2 lakh for death and ₹50,000 for grievous hurt.
- Third-Party Insurance- Simplified procedures, covering hired drivers as well.

Vehicle and Road Standards

Vehicle Fitness- Establishing model Inspection and Certification Centers across 28 States/UTs to weed out unfit vehicles.

Blackspot Rectification- Priority rectification of high-accident spots on National Highways through engineering measures.

Road Safety Audits- Mandatory at design, construction, and operation stages for all highway projects.

Research & Legislation

Center of Excellence- Collaboration with IIT Madras for research and product development.

Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, 2019- Introduced significantly higher penalties for violations like speeding, drunk driving, and neglecting safety gear (helmets/seatbelts).

6. Way Ahead

Systems Approach- Adopting global best practices where the entire transport system is designed to be forgiving of human error.

Institutional Collaboration- The government should leverage research from premier institutes like IITs and CRRI (Central Road Research Institute) to refine policies.

Corporate Responsibility- The corporate sector should contribute via CSR funds for research, awareness campaigns, and infrastructure support.

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