

Road Accidents- a Disaster that can be Mitigated

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Road traffic injuries are emerging as one of the major causes of death and disability globally, with more than 1.3 million people dying in fatal Road Traffic Accidents annually. As per a WHO report, road traffic injuries are the leading killer of people aged 5-29 years and 57% of road crash fatalities and injuries occur in the age group of 15-64 years, which is considered an economically productive age group (Pastory & Mwamasangula, 2022). Road traffic injuries are currently ranked ninth globally among the leading causes of disability-adjusted life years lost, and the ranking is projected to rise to third. Globally, more men (73%) die in road accidents than women.

The number of incidents and casualties in accidents is increasing with every passing day as the number of vehicles on the roads is also rising. The number of motor vehicles is expected to increase faster in developing countries as

they have low figures at present. People in developing countries, which comprise 84% of the global population, currently own around 40% of the world's motor vehicles. However, 90% of the people who died from road traffic accidents belong to these low and middle-income countries. So, policymakers must recognize this epidemic as a public health crisis and design applicable policy responses.

As per the news reports, India ranks third, only after USA and Japan, in road accidents with 480,652 road accidents that claimed 150,785 lives, which is more than any other country (News18, 2022), and the estimated road traffic rate per 1 lakh population in India is 15.56, as reported by the Global Health Observatory of WHO, (World Health Organization, 2021). India possesses only about 1% of the world's vehicle population, but experiences about six percent of the global road traffic incidents (Sun, 2022).



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Road Accidents in Kashmir

Kashmir is passing through a phase of rapid urbanization, motorization, and industrialization, but the lack of safety-related policies and programs has resulted in increased incidences of road traffic accidents. The number of road accidents across Jammu and Kashmir in 2020 was around 5000. Traffic discrepancies have been a major source of death, injury, and property damage every year. A rough detail of the number of road accidents across Jammu and Kashmir in India from 2014-2020 is given in the below table:

Moreover, as per the data compiled by the J&K Traffic Police Department, 5036 accidents happened in J&K from January to November 2021 in which 713 persons were killed and 6447 were injured. In Kashmir alone, the figures suggest that 1758 accidents took place since January 2021 in which 192 persons were killed and 2206 injured. 36 persons were killed and 333 injured in

