

“BEWARE FROM ROAD ACCIDENTS: AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE”

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Abstract

Road accidents have emerged as one of the most serious public safety challenges in India. Despite rapid infrastructure development and increasing motorization, the country continues to witness a significant rise in road traffic injuries and fatalities. This paper examines the causes, consequences, and preventive measures of road accidents from an Indian perspective. It highlights the socio-legal dimensions of road safety, evaluates existing legal frameworks, and emphasizes the need for awareness, enforcement, and technological intervention. The study concludes that a combined approach involving legal reform, public awareness, and infrastructural improvement is essential to reduce road accidents in India.

Keywords

Road Safety, Traffic Laws, Road Accidents, India, Public Awareness, Motor Vehicles Act, Negligence

1. Introduction

Road transport is the backbone of India's economy, yet it comes with significant risks. India records one of the highest numbers of road accident fatalities globally. According to recent data, **over 4.6 lakh road accidents and more than 1.75 lakh deaths were reported in 2024 alone**, indicating the severity of the crisis.

Road accidents not only cause loss of life but also impose economic and psychological burdens on society. The increasing number of vehicles, poor road discipline, and weak enforcement of traffic laws contribute significantly to this issue.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the causes of road accidents in India
2. To study the socio-legal framework governing road safety
3. To examine the impact of road accidents on society
4. To suggest preventive and corrective measures

3. Research Methodology

This research is **doctrinal and analytical** in nature. It is based on secondary sources such as government reports, journal articles, legal statutes, and online databases. Statistical data and judicial interpretations are also analyzed.

4. Magnitude of Road Accidents in India

India faces an alarming situation regarding road safety. Reports indicate:

- Over **1.73 lakh deaths in 2023** due to road accidents
- Two-wheelers account for a large proportion of fatalities
- Majority of victims belong to the **18–45 age group**, affecting the productive workforce

These figures highlight that road accidents are not just transport issues but major **public health and human rights concerns**.

5. Causes of Road Accidents in India

5.1 Human Factors

- Over-speeding (major cause of accidents)
- Drunken driving
- Mobile phone usage while driving
- Reckless and negligent driving

Studies show that **over-speeding alone contributes to a majority of road accident deaths** .

5.2 Infrastructure Deficiencies

- Poor road conditions and potholes
- Lack of proper signage and lighting
- Absence of pedestrian crossings

5.3 Vehicle-Related Issues

- Poor maintenance of vehicles
- Lack of safety features

5.4 Environmental Factors

- Bad weather conditions
- Visibility issues

5.5 Systemic Issues

- Weak enforcement of traffic laws
- Lack of awareness among road users
- Inadequate emergency response systems

Research confirms that factors like **urbanization, motorization, and population growth significantly increase accident risks** .

6. Legal Framework in India

6.1 Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (Amended 2019)

The primary legislation governing road safety in India includes provisions for:

- Licensing
- Traffic regulation
- Penalties for violations
- Compensation to victims

6.2 Indian Penal Code (IPC)

- Section 279: Rash driving
- Section 304A: Causing death by negligence

6.3 Recent Amendments

The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 introduced:

- Higher penalties
- Electronic monitoring
- Protection for Good Samaritans

7. Socio-Economic Impact

Road accidents have far-reaching consequences:

- Loss of human life
- Disability and long-term injuries

- Economic loss (estimated 5–7% of GDP in some studies)
- Burden on healthcare system

Young individuals are the most affected, leading to a **loss of productive human capital**.

8. Government Initiatives

- National Road Safety Policy
- Road Safety Awareness Campaigns
- Black spot identification and correction
- Promotion of vehicle safety standards

Recent developments also include **advanced driver-assistance technologies and smart vehicle systems** aimed at reducing accidents .

9. Preventive Measures

9.1 Legal Measures

- Strict enforcement of traffic laws
- Fast-track courts for accident cases

9.2 Awareness Measures

- Road safety education in schools
- Public campaigns on safe driving

9.3 Technological Measures

- Use of AI-based traffic monitoring
- Installation of CCTV cameras

9.4 Infrastructure Development

- Better road design
- Proper lighting and signage

10. Findings

- Human negligence is the primary cause of road accidents
- Existing laws are adequate but poorly enforced
- Awareness among citizens is significantly low
- Infrastructure gaps contribute heavily to accidents

11. Suggestions

1. Strengthen law enforcement mechanisms
2. Introduce compulsory road safety education
3. Improve road infrastructure quality
4. Encourage use of safety gear (helmets, seat belts)
5. Promote technology-driven solutions

12. Conclusion

Road accidents in India are a **serious socio-legal problem** requiring urgent attention. While legislative measures exist, their effective implementation remains a challenge. A collaborative approach involving government, judiciary, and citizens is essential to ensure safer roads. Public awareness and responsible behavior are the key to preventing accidents and saving lives.

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