

Road Safety

Why in news?

The recent Pune Porsche case has reignited the concern surrounding hit-and-run accidents in India.

Road Accidents in India Report 2022

- **Area of accidents** - 32.9% in National Highways, 23.1% in Road Highways and 43.9% in other roads.
- **Rural Vs Urban** - About 69% happened in rural areas and around 32% in urban areas.
- **Age group** - 66.5% of young adults (18-45 years of age).
- **Type of users** - 44.5% of 2-wheelers followed by 19.5% of pedestrians.
- **Vehicles involved** - Two-wheelers tops for the 2nd consecutive years followed by light vehicles.
- **Vulnerable States**- In 2022, Tamil Nadu topped in number of road accidents followed by Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh topped in number of fatalities due to road accidents followed by Tamil Nadu.

What are the challenges of road safety in India?

- **Drunk driving**: Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is a leading cause of road accidents.
- **Distracted Driving**- The use of mobile phones and other distractions while driving increases the risk of accidents.
- **Non-compliance**- Aggressive driving behaviors such as overtaking dangerously, not obeying traffic signals, and lane indiscipline.
- **Poor road infrastructure**- The poor condition of roads along with low visibility and subpar road design and engineering, including the quality of materials and construction.
- **Vehicular condition**- Old vehicles are more likely to experience frequent breakdowns, malfunctions, and lack safety features.
- **Overloading of vehicles**- It could pose a hazard to road traffic, increasing the risk of accidents for both themselves and other road users.
- **Driving without licenses**- Easy access to driving licenses without a thorough assessment of skills and driving without them is a major contributing factor to the increase in road accidents.
- **Inadequate law enforcement**- Although laws and regulations for ensuring road safety are in place but enforcement is often lacking, allowing offenders to escape accountability for their actions.
- **Lack of awareness**- Most road accident cases occur due to carelessness or lack of awareness, making road safety education essential for survival.

Global initiatives on road safety

- **Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety, 2015-** Under the declaration, the countries plan to achieve SDG 3.6, which is to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030.
- India is a signatory to the declaration and is committed to a reduction in fatalities.
- **Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030-** The UN General Assembly adopted resolution “Improving global road safety” with the ambitious target of preventing at least 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.
- The Global Plan aligns with the Stockholm Declaration, by emphasizing the importance of a holistic approach to road safety.
- **Bloomberg Initiative for Global Road Safety (BIGRS) 2020-2025-** It aims to reduce road crash fatalities and injuries in low and middle-income countries and cities by implementing a comprehensive set of actions that are proven to save lives

What are the steps taken by India to promote road safety?

- **Motor Vehicle Amendment (MVA) Act 2019-** It provides for the constitution of the National Road Safety Board to advise the Central Government or State Government, on all aspects pertaining to road safety and traffic management.
- **Vehicle Scrapping Policy-** Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has formulated the policy based on incentives/dis-incentives and for creating an ecosystem to phase out older, unfit polluting vehicles.
- **National Road Safety Policy-** Based on the recommendations of the *Sunder Committee* the policy initiatives to be framed/taken by the Government at all levels to improve road safety activities in the country.
- **e-DAR project-** Electronic Detailed Accident Report (e-DAR) project has been initiated to establish a *central repository* for reporting, management, and analysis of road accident data across the nation.
- **Good Samaritan law-** The law protects good samaritans from harassment on the actions being taken by them to save the life of the road accident victims.

Good Samaritan is a person who renders emergency medical or non-medical assistance to a victim at the accident scene.

- **India State Support Programme for Road Safety-** The World Bank has approved loan for 7 States under which a *single accident reporting number* will be set up to better manage post-crash events.

What lies ahead?

- It is crucial to establish a proper driving licensing system to ensure standardised driving skills.
- Regular, professional enforcement of rules and swift and innovative solutions to traffic indiscipline and bottlenecks by the administration could help evolve a healthy safe-road culture.

References

1. [NDTV- India's hit and run data](#)
2. [PIB- Steps taken by India to promote road safety](#)

