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The Sociological Study on Incidents of Road Accidents in Haryana

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ABSTRACT

In the modern era, the development of an efficient transport system is crucial for achieving national growth objectives. Across the globe, the transport sector is undergoing major transformations, and India is no exception. In the 21st century, India has made significant strides in expanding and modernizing its transportation infrastructure. However, this advancement has been accompanied by a troubling increase in road accidents, leading to considerable loss of life, injuries, and damage to property each year. Haryana, like many other Indian states, continues to suffer substantial human and economic losses due to road accidents. This situation underscores the pressing need to analyse the trends and frequency of such incidents. To address this issue, a temporal analysis of road accidents in Haryana has been undertaken. The study utilizes data from multiple sources, including official government reports from the Transport Department of Haryana, police accident records and FIRs, as well as the Statistical Abstract of Haryana. Various statistical methods such as line graphs and tabulations have been employed for analytical purposes. Additionally, district-wise accident data across different time frames have been represented through bar graphs. The study also emphasizes the importance of implementing effective road safety measures to mitigate the loss of lives and property.

Key Words : Road accidents, Road Safety, Legal Provisions, Property Loss

INTRODUCTION

Road traffic accidents, trauma and deaths are increasing steadily with increase in the number of vehicles on road, more prosperity leading to increased travel and host of other factors associated with poor engineering of the roads, negligent and rash driving, lack of alertness and diversion of mind, and numerous other factors. However, the rising trend of motorization comes at a significant cost, both in terms of human lives and the long-term consequences for survivors and their families. Although, road traffic injuries are one of the leading causes of death, disabilities and hospitalization in the country. Road traffic injuries constitute the 8th leading causes of death in India in 2016 (IMHE;2017), and are the leading cause of health loss among young men of age 15-49 years. A total of 4,64,910 road accidents have been reported by States and Union Territories (UTs) in the calendar year 2017 claiming 1,47,913 lives and causing injuries to 4,70,975 persons. These figures translate, on an average, into 1274 accidents and 405 deaths every day or 53 accidents and 17

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deaths every hour in the country. The year 2017 has shown marked improvement over 2016. The number of road accidents in 2017 is lower by 3.3% than that of the previous year, 2016. Similarly, the number of injuries and deaths on account of road accidents has been lower by 4.8% and 1.9%, respectively (MORTH, 2017). According to the Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India report released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), three people died every 10 minutes in road accidents in India in 2015. 6 India recorded a total of 501,423 road accidents and 146,133 road accident deaths in 2015; this equates to 1,374 accidents and 400 deaths on India 's roads every day. Sadly, 54.1% of people killed in road accidents are in the 15-34 years age group. It is estimated that the economy lost around 3% of GDP (1999-2000) due to road mishaps. Statistically, it has shown that the number of deaths and injuries due to road accidents has been increasing steadily as Haryana has been listed among 15 states of India ranked worst in terms of road safety, by the union ministry of roads and highways. Road traffic accidents (RTA) are the most significant public health and social issues in India. Roads remain the most widely used mode of transportation globally, with motorized vehicles offering a fast and convenient means of travel. However, the rising trend of motorization comes at a significant cost, both in terms of human lives and the long-term consequences for victims.

Understanding Road Accidents and Road Safety:

Road accidents are a critical public health issue globally, often resulting in significant loss of life, injuries, social stigma and economic costs. Understanding road accidents involves examining a complex interplay of factors, including human behavior, vehicle conditions, infrastructure and environmental influences.

Definition of Road Accident: Road accidents, also known as traffic accidents, refer to incidents that occur on roadways involving one or more vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists, resulting in property damage, injury or death. These accidents can arise from various factors, including human error, mechanical failure, or adverse environmental conditions.

Road safety, on the other hand, refers to the strategies, practices, and measures implemented to prevent road accidents and reduce their consequences.

Sociological Perspectives:

Sociological perspectives that can help interpret road accidents in Haryana are Structural Functionalism and Conflict Theory. These perspectives help us understand the underlying societal structures and inequalities contributing to high accident rates.

Structural Functionalist Perspective:

This view sees society as a system of interrelated parts working together for stability. Road accidents are interpreted as a result of dysfunctions in the social system.Inadequate infrastructure and poor traffic regulation contribute significantly to accidents. For example, unsafe merging of village traffic with highways and poor road designs in Haryana create structural issues that lead to accidents (Singh et al., 2015).

The lack of pre-hospital care and trauma services in rural areas points to system-level failures in health infrastructure, leading to higher fatality rates from accidents (Rajesh et al., 2012).

Conflict Theory:

This theory focuses on social inequality and power disparities as root causes of problems like

road accidents.

Vulnerable road users (VRUs) like pedestrians and two-wheeler riders, often from lower socio-economic backgrounds, are disproportionately affected by accidents in Haryana (Singh *et al.,* 2015).

Study Area:

Haryana state is located between the 27 39 N to 30 55 N latitudes and 74 28 E to 77 36 E longitudes in the north western part of India. Situated in North India with less than 1.4% (44,212 km^2 (17,070 sq. m)) of India and 39's land area, it is ranked 22nd in terms of area. Chandigarh is the state capital; Faridabad in National Capital Region is the most populous city of the state, Gurugram is a leading financial hub and Ambala is Ambala is a major transportation hub in northern India. As per the report of the Statistical abstract of Haryana 2017-2018 shows that the area of Haryana is 44212 sq.km. there are 06 Divisions, 22Districts, 22 Sub- Divisions, 80 Tehsils, 94 Sub- tehsils, 49 Blocks, 143 Villages (As per Census 2011) and 6841 Towns (As per Census 2011). Haryana's population is 25351 (As per Census 2011). The sex ratio is 879 females per thousand males. The demographic distribution reveals significant urban and rural populations, each facing distinct challenges. Haryana has 6 administrative divisions, 22 districts, 72 sub-divisions, 93 revenue tehsils, 50 sub-tehsils, 140 community development blocks, 154 cities and towns, 6,848 villages and 6222 villages panchayats. Literacy rate in Haryana has seen an upward trend and is 76.64 percent as per2011 population census. Male literacy stands at 85.38 percent, while female literacy is at66.67 percent. Total population of Haryana comprises of 25351462 million, male population comprises of 13494374 million and female population comprises of 11856728 million (State Statistical Abstract of Haryana | Department of Economic and Statistical Affairs Haryana |India, n.d.).

Objectives:

1. To Assess the causes of road accidents in Haryana.
2. To analyse the social impact of road accidents in Haryana.
3. To suggest measures to prevent/reduce future road accidents.

METHODOLOGY

Present study has been completed through secondary data obtained through Government reports from the Transport Department, Haryana, Police accident records and FIRs and statistical abstract of Haryana issued by department of economics and statistical analysis, Haryana. Requisite graphs have been created using Microsoft excel, for example, line graph has been created to show the road accidents in Haryana over the time from the year 2015-2017 and bar graphs has been drawn to show the frequency of road accidents in the districts of Haryana.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Road Accident Data (Haryana, 2015–2017):

The bar graph shows between 2015 and 2017, Haryana saw a gradual rise in road accident cases and associated casualties. Total accidents increased slightly each year, from 11,233 in 2015 to 11,721 in 2017. The number of persons injured rose from 12,959 in 2015 to 15,351 in 2017, reflecting a growing burden on emergency and healthcare services. Fatalities also increased steadily from 4,865 in 2015 to 5,380 in 2017, highlighting worsening road safety conditions. Interestingly,

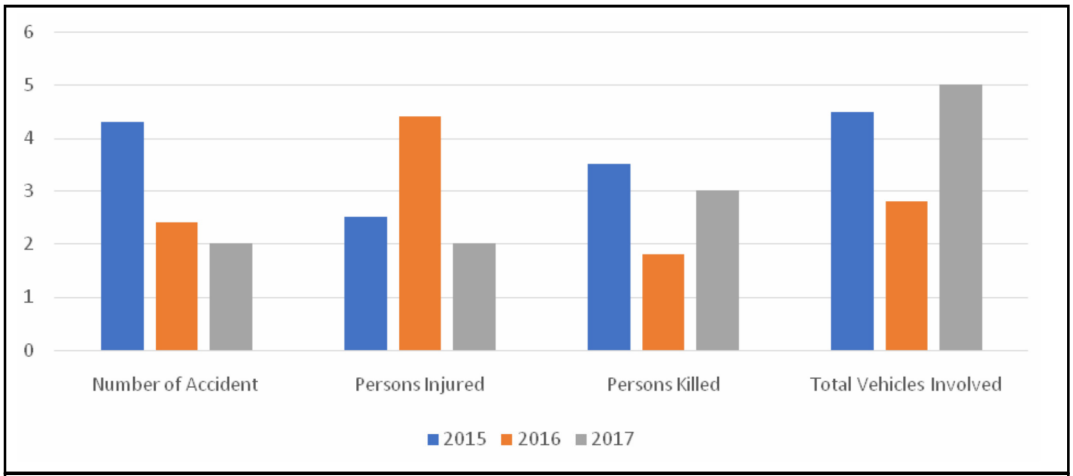

Fig. 1 : Road Accident Data (Haryana 2015-2017)

while the total number of vehicles involved slightly dropped in 2016 compared to 2015, it rose again in 2017, suggesting a correlation between traffic volume and accident severity. This trend underscores the need for better traffic management, road design, and safety awareness in the state (Road Accidents and Safety Measures, n.d.). This trend highlights an initial decline in accidents during the pandemic, followed by a resurgence as daily life returned to pre-pandemic patterns. The sharp fluctuation in road accident figures is a cause for concern, as it not only leads to loss of human life but also negatively impacts the economy by straining public resources and reducing workforce productivity**.** The road accident is a huge variation in fatality risk across different socio-demographic factors including education, income, class, income, occupation, etc. Previous studies proved that low socioeconomic status has a close connection with traffic injuries pertaining to individuals, a regional, and a national level in all respects. Some studies shows that an area like deprivation, poverty, vulnerability, social group, income, unemployment, parenting, neighborhood conditions, and residential density, etc. The studies shows that low socioeconomic status/demographic factors are directly associated with road traffic accidents. It is also shows that safety-seeking behavior is largely influenced by a large number of social determinant factors like intro/extrovert culture, marital status, occupation/employment status, age, gender, education, occupation identity crisis etc. It is found that decreased social capital and advanced stages of deprivation also linked with a more fatal injury degree. Some studies shows that road accidents risk was found more among the lowest-ranked group, than in the highest-ranked group in measurable parameters. Some studies have proved that parents with a low level of education, parents working in unorganized sectors, living in underserved areas, single parenting, parents having only one son/daughter normally are not bother or serious about venters like speed, illegal joyriding, riding without a helmet, dangerous racing, triple riding, wheeling, of their children. Further, it is found income, unemployment, lack of skills, poor housing, insolvency, big household, poor health, and family problems as indicators of relative deprivation are one of the key factors for more road accidents among the sections having low socioeconomic status. Next, we will try to know about the "relationship between the level of deprivation in the residential areas of a road accident and injury rate is approximately twice as high in the 15% most underserved areas as in the 15% most well off areas 12". alcohol and other drug usages by the drivers belong to the high social group. In India the study to the link between socio-

economic status and road accidents is very general and lacks in depth.

District Wise Number of Road Accidents in Haryana:

The data reflects a concerning trend in Haryana's road safety landscape. At the state level, both accidents and casualties steadily increased from 2015 to 2017. Accidents rose from 11,233 to 11,721, while fatalities jumped from 4,865 to 5,380. Injuries also surged from 12,959 to 15,351, indicating not just more crashes, but more severe ones. This suggests growing traffic density and insufficient road safety interventions.

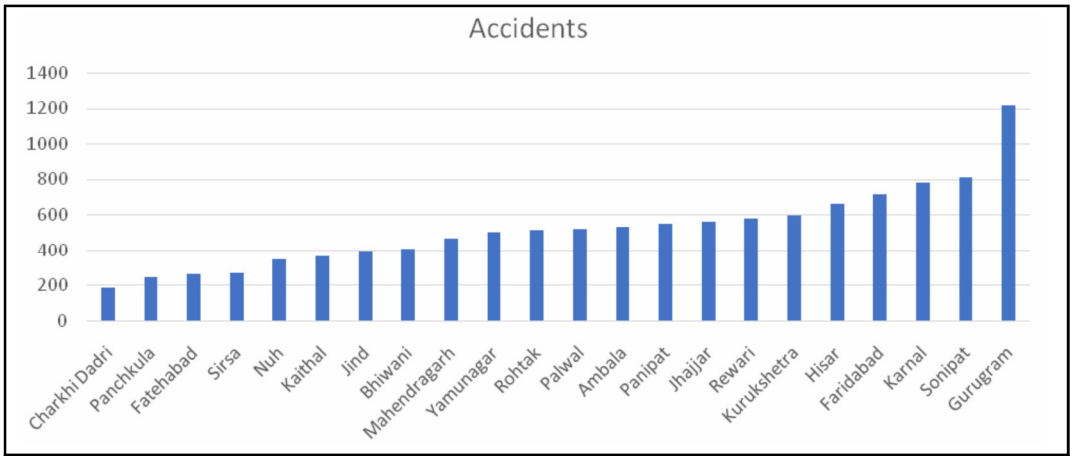

Fig. 2 : District wise number of Road Accident in Haryana

The district-wise data for 2017 reveals that Gurugram had the highest number of accidents (1,214) and deaths (481), likely due to its rapid urbanization and high vehicle density. Other high-casualty districts include Sonipat (397 deaths), Karnal (376), and Panipat (306). On the other hand, smaller or more rural districts like Charkhi Dadri and Fatehabad reported fewer cases, possibly due to lower traffic volume(*State Statistical Abstract of Haryana 2017-18 | Department of Economic and Statistical Affairs Haryana | India*, n.d.). Thus, this data underscores the need for targeted road safety policies, especially in high-risk urban areas, along with improved emergency response systems and traffic law enforcement throughout the state.

Constitutional and Legal Framework:

Compensation under Section 166 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988:

The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, serves as comprehensive legislation that governs various aspects related to motor vehicles in India, including accident compensation. Section 166 of the Act is particularly important, as it provides a legal mechanism for victims of road accidents to claim compensation for injuries, property damage, or fatalities. This section ensures that victims or their legal representatives have the right to seek compensation for their losses. Section 166 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, is a crucial legal provision for providing relief to victims of road accidents. It empowers individuals to seek compensation for injuries, fatalities, and property damage caused by motor vehicle accidents. This framework aims to reduce the financial and emotional burden on accident victims and their families, thereby promoting justice and equity in the aftermath of road accidents (The Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 | Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government

of India, n.d.).

Key Provisions of Section 166:

Eligibility for Filing a Claim: Any person who has sustained injury or property damage in a motor vehicle accident can file a claim. In the case of fatal accidents, the legal representatives of the deceased are entitled to apply for compensation.

Jurisdiction for Filing Claims: The claim must be filed with the Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal (MACT) that has jurisdiction in the area where the accident occurred, where the claimant resides, or where the defendant (the person responsible for the accident) resides.

Timeframe for Filing Claims: While the Act does not specify a strict time limit for filing claims, it is advisable to submit the claim promptly to avoid legal complications or delays.

Types of Compensation: Compensation can be claimed for bodily injuries, fatalities, or property damage. This may include medical costs, loss of income, pain and suffering, and other relevant expenses.

These state-level schemes complement national efforts by ensuring that victims have access to quality medical treatment without financial burdens.

Trauma Care Centers and Ambulance Services:

To provide specialized care for road accident victims, the government has established trauma care centers along highways and in major cities. These centers are equipped to handle severe injuries and provide critical care in the aftermath of accidents. Additionally, 108 ambulance services, which are operational in many states, ensure that victims are transported to the nearest hospital or trauma center as quickly as possible, reducing the risk of complications from delayed treatment.

Employee Compensation for Work-Related Accidents: For individuals involved in road accidents while on the job, the Employee's Compensation Act, 1923, offers medical benefits. Employers are required to provide compensation for injuries sustained in the course of employment, including coverage for medical expenses, rehabilitation, and long-term disability care. This applies particularly to drivers, delivery personnel, and others whose work involves travel.

Rehabilitation and Long: Term Care: Accident victims who suffer long-term disabilities or require prolonged recovery periods are entitled to rehabilitation services, including physiotherapy, counseling, and prosthetic support. Government hospitals and several private healthcare providers offer these services, often subsidized for economically weaker sections. Rehabilitation is crucial for victims who need to regain mobility, manage pain, or reintegrate into society after the accident.

Third-Party Insurance Coverage: Under the Motor Vehicles Act, third-party insurance is mandatory for all motor vehicles in India. This insurance ensures that victims of road accidents receive compensation for injuries sustained due to the negligence of the insured driver. Medical expenses are covered as part of the compensation, allowing victims to claim reimbursement for their treatment costs, rehabilitation, and long-term care.

Legal Aid and Compensation: Road accident victims are also entitled to legal recourse and compensation through Motor Accident Claims Tribunals (MACT). These tribunals offer a platform for victims to claim compensation for medical expenses, lost wages, and long-term disabilities. The legal process ensures that victims can recover financial support for their treatment, either through insurance claims or compensation awarded by the tribunal(Procedure for Compensation to Road Accident Victims | Legal Service India - Law Articles - Legal Resources, n.d.).

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that the problem of deaths and injuries as a result of road accidents in Haryana is serious enough to demand attention of respective administrative authorities. Newspapers are red with the daily reports of fatal road accidents. Haryana has the largest number of road accidents which calls for better roads, better law enforcement measures, education and training of our youth in following the rules of traffic. Drunk and high-speed traffic has to be checked. Road and vehicle design have to improve. The road visibility and regulatory signals must improve. Active surveillance and watch by traffic regulating authorities and control of offenders by associating judiciary for instant punishment is the need of the hour to save lives. Without enforcing rules of discipline and law on chaotic roads, reckless drivers and offenders will continue to kill and maim the precious innocent lives.

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