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ROAD SAFETY AND HUMAN SECURITY IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

Road and transportation are now an essential component of human interaction in the modern world. In some way or another, everyone uses the roads. Although the current transportation system has reduced travel times, it has also increased the chance of fatalities. Road accidents claim thousands of lives each year and seriously hurt millions more. Road accidents claim the lives of over 80,000 people in India alone each year, accounting for 13% of all global fatalities. Most often, accidents happen because of a road user's negligence or lack of awareness about road safety. As a result, learning about road safety is just as important as learning other survival basics. In terms of road traffic, India is one of the busiest nations in the world. 2017 saw the south Asian nation's automobile sector rise to the fourth largest in the world. More than three million new cars were registered in the nation in 2021. Moreover, five million kilometers of roads in India carried more than 65 percent of the nation's goods and nearly 90 percent of its passenger traffic. Road safety has become a concern of the utmost importance for the people of the nation due to the sharp rise in the number of cars and the ruthlessly packed Indian highways.

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CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF ROAD SAFETY

Road Safety can be defined as "methods and measures for minimizing the possibility or risk that people through using, road network would be involved in an accident or incident that could result in property damage, significant injuries, and/or fatalities." Road safety is the use of all available safety measures on the road to avoid and protect against traffic accidents. It is done to keep individuals safe while they are on the roadways. All road users, including pedestrians, two-wheelers, four-wheelers, multi-wheelers, and other users of transport vehicles, must be made safe. It is beneficial and safe for everyone to practice road safety precautions throughout their lives. While driving or walking on the road, everyone should show consideration for others and ensure their safety. One of the most crucial factors in preventing roadside accidents, injuries, and fatalities is ensuring that people are safe while driving. Based on national statistical data regarding the total number of reported accidents and fatalities, we may assess the significance of road safety. Pedestrians and one-way road users are involved in about 42% of instances.

There are many ways to raise awareness among the public, including seminars, workshops, adding lessons on basic road safety to the school curriculum, educating people about the "green cross" signal, which means to stop, look, listen, and think before crossing the street, teaching people about traffic signals, teaching people how to read road signs, etc. Following all traffic safety precautions significantly reduces the risk of any road accidents. Basic vehicle knowledge, defensive driving in accordance with weather and road conditions, the use of vehicle lights and horns, wearing a seat belt, making good use of vehicle mirrors, avoiding excessive speeding, understanding road lights, maintaining a safe following distance, knowing how to handle emergency situations, broadcasting awareness documentaries on TV, etc. are some examples of effective road safety measures. Road safety is a science that aims to lessen the number of fatal accidents involving valuable lives that are brought on by the scrupulous driving practices of both licensed and unlicensed drivers, pedestrians' vulnerability on the roads, the lack of motorable roads, and, to top it all off, the underperforming, uncommitted, and unmotivated authorities assigned to the most difficult task. Families are broken up, losing their primary earners, and loved ones, and our nation is losing people at a threshold rate.
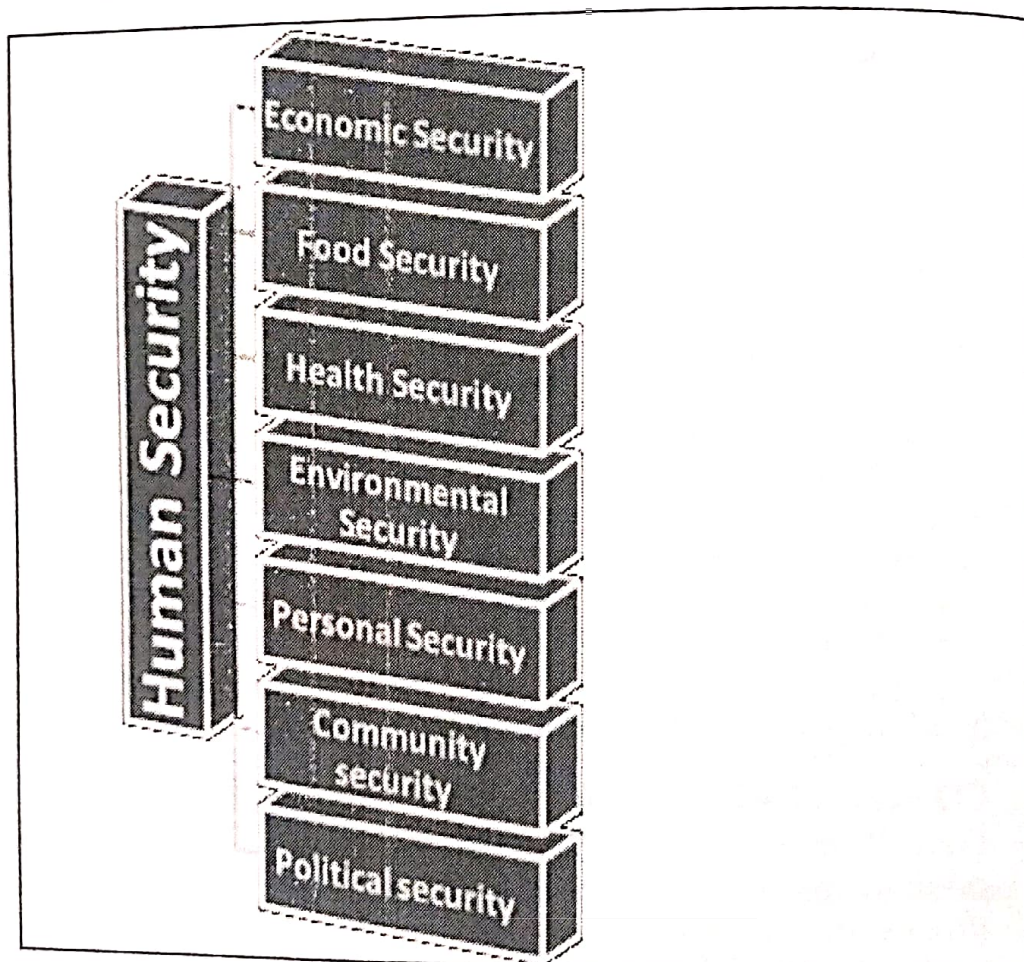
CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF HUMAN SECURITY

Like all other creatures, humans look for security as a survival mechanism. Human Security can be defined as "absence of threats to various core human values, including individuals' physical safety." Security is now viewed more from an individual

than a state perspective. The protection and provision of a safe environment for humans from threats is officially known as human security. The idea of "human security" is concerned with the safety of individuals and groups of people. "Daily life" refers to that aspect of human security which relates to security issues with life in communities and families and extends security and safety to areas which have not yet been explored. In this context, "survival" relates to the security aspect and also means protection from threats to the physical integrity and provision of basic requirements. Human security is focused on people. It turns its attention to safeguarding people. In order to address sources of dangers, it is crucial to consider individual wellbeing and take into account the requirements of regular people. Human security would broaden the scope of protection to include a wider range of threats, such as environmental pollution, infectious diseases, and economic deprivation, in addition to protecting the state from external aggression. The realization of human security requires not only the participation of governments, but also a wider range of different actors, including local communities, non-governmental organizations, and regional and international organizations. In addition to providing protection, human security also gives individuals and societies more power. People participate by coming up with and putting into action solutions to insecurity.

Source: Compiled by researcher

ROAD SAFETY AND HUMAN SECURITY

Among the many aspects of human security, personal security is an important aspect. Therefore, it is very important to understand the many threats that affect human security. Studying the risk of road accidents is very important among the threats to human safety or the threats to personal safety in human safety. The increased number of accidents in India today is a very serious matter which needs to be studied from the point of view of personal or human safety. Human security is a concept that combines human rights with development and considers both the security of individuals and the security of communities. A paradigm shift away from the conventional idea of national security and toward personal security is currently taking place.

MAJOR CAUSES OF ACCIDENTS ON THE ROAD

The identification of the contributing and determining elements that cause traffic accidents is the main goal of this section. The causes of traffic accidents are divided into three categories for the sake of this research: human factors, vehicle factors, and environmental factors.

Human Factors

Road traffic accidents are primarily caused by variables that are related to people. Most studies have shown that between 70 and 80 percent of all traffic accidents are caused by human error, with drivers' mistakes receiving most of the blame, especially in developing nations (Fanuel, 2006; WHO, 2013). All the elements relating to drivers and pedestrians are referred to as human factors (road users' error). Most injuries and fatalities that happen on the road are caused by drivers who make mistakes while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, lack of expertise, inattention, or other factors (WHO, 2013).

Vehicle Factors

Other contributing and determining elements in the occurrence of many road traffic accidents, particularly in developing nations are vehicle-related problems. According to (Fanuel, 2006), mechanical and technical flaws in the vehicle contribute considerably to traffic accidents. This is due to a lack of routine maintenance, the most common cause of which being faulty brakes and tyres. It is important to maintain cars properly throughout their working lives in addition to raising standards and improving vehicle designs (WHO, 2013). Most automobiles in poor nations lack routine maintenance and are outdated and second-hand (mainly used).

Environmental Factors

Environmental elements play a role in determining traffic accidents as well. Injury-causing variables include elements of
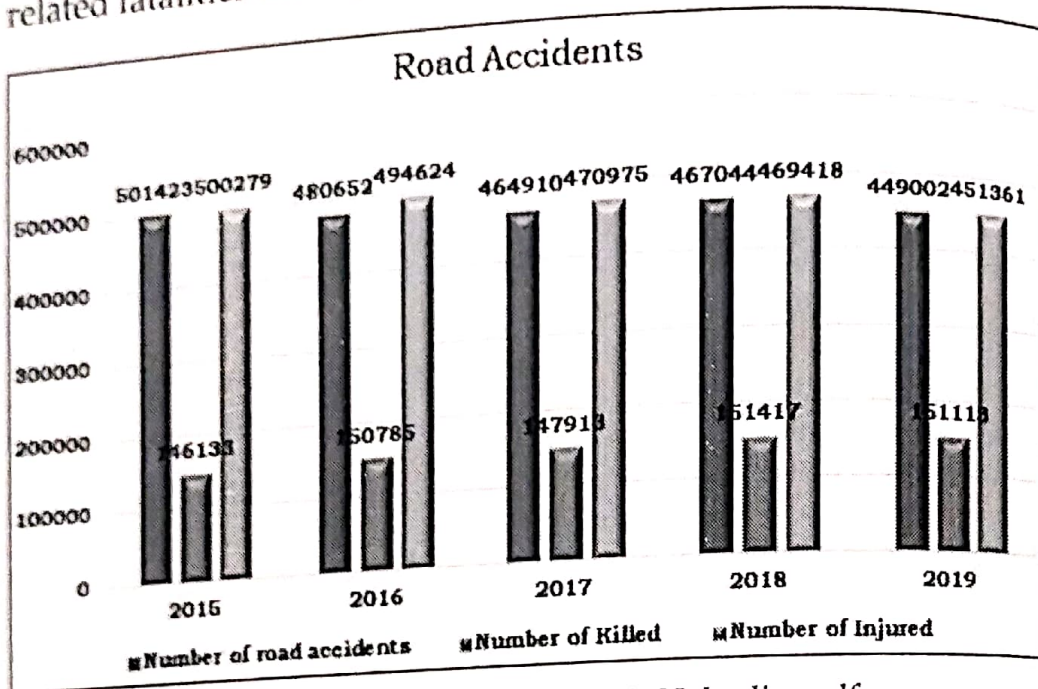
road design, illumination, and surfacing, as well as unfavorable climate and poor road conditions (Fanuel, 2006). Through safety audits during the planning, constructing, and operation stages, developed nations continuously work to meet the safety criteria of road circumstances. The efforts to fulfil the safety standards of roads conditions through safety assessment during the planning, constructing, and operation are in their early stages, even though the road network is expanding quickly and rapidly motorization in the developing nations.

INDIAN ROAD ACCIDENT SCENARIO

2019 saw a total of 449,002 accidents occur across the nation, resulting in 151,113 fatalities and 451,361 injuries. In terms of percentage, the number of accidents fell by 3.86% in 2019 compared to the previous year, while the number of accident-related fatalities and injuries fell by 0.20% and 3.86, respectively.
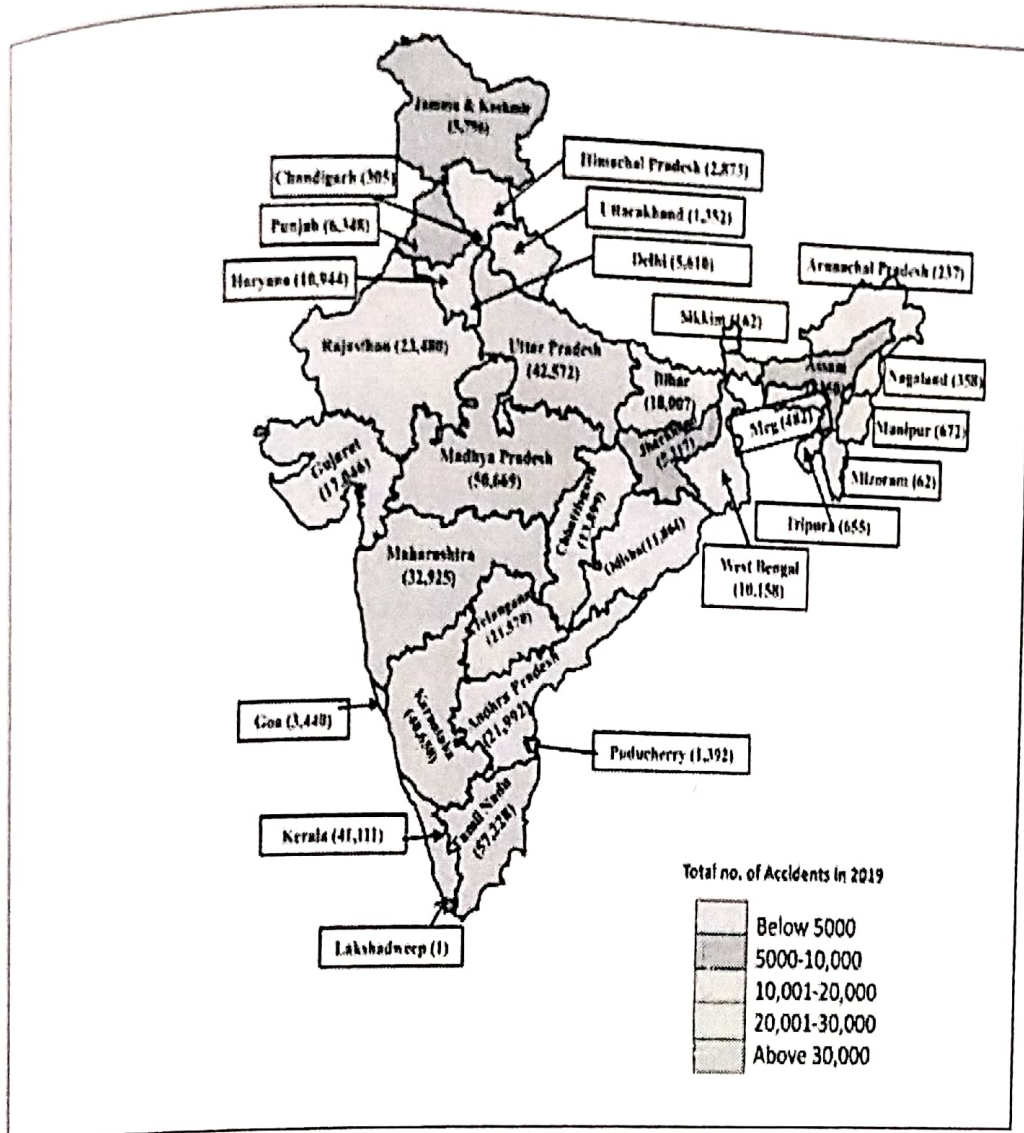

Source: https://morth.nic.in/sites/default/files/RA_Uploading.pdf

Road accidents are multi-cause events that frequently originate from the interaction of several causes. such as I human error, (ii) the road environment, and (iii) the state of the vehicle. The following, among others, is revealed by the information on the causes of traffic accidents that was received from the States/UTs:

Over speeding is a prominent cause of death under the category of traffic rule violations, accounting for 67.3% of all fatalities, followed by driving on the wrong side of the road, which was responsible for 6.1% of all fatalities in accidents. 3.3% of fatalities were related to the use of mobile phones, while 3.5% were related to drunk driving. Additionally, the number of people fatally injured for these reasons increased significantly in 2019 compared to 2018, indicating the need for better enforcement of MVA 2019.

15% of accidents include a driver who has a license that is not current or a learner's permit.

14% of deaths and 30% of deaths can be related to not wearing seat belts or helmets, respectively.

41% of deaths in accidents involved vehicles older than ten years.

About 10% of fatalities occurred in overloaded vehicles.

State Wise Road Accidents in 2019

Source: https://morth.nic.in/sites/default/files/RA_Uploading.pdf

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