



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCE RESEARCH, IDEAS AND INNOVATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY

ISSN: 2454-132X

Impact factor: 4.295

(Volume3, Issue5)

Available online at www.ijariit.com

Safety Begins from Childhood

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Abstract: Every year, India experiences an unusually high number of fatalities caused by Head and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI). Of these, 65 to 70 % are caused in road mishaps. The balance are due to industrial accidents, War and Counter Insurgency Operations (CI Ops), Sports field Accidents, Domestic Violence, Riots, Natural Disasters and other acts of God including even an accidental fall. In 2015 alone, the number of officially recorded deaths was over 1, 46,000, and injured with debilitating trauma was over half a million. This toll is growing at an alarming rate with no check or respite in sight. With one percent vehicles, India carries the burden of over 10 % deaths in the world and there is a traffic accident every minute and a death every 4 minutes. In the US, the fatality rate is one out of two hundred victims of road trauma and in India it is one in six. A majority of Head Injury victims are two wheeler riders and pedestrians, and unfortunately, we have come to be termed as the “Head Injury” Capital of the world. The victims in India are mostly in the age group of 18–44 years and are often, the only “Bread Winners” for a family of 4 to 6. A large number of survivors of such accidents sustain varying degrees of debilitating damage and require long term rehabilitation treatment. This is virtually non-existent in most parts of India, and where available, is highly expensive. In several cases, victims of TBI have to relearn to walk, talk and formulate thought from scratch. Even mild TBI leads to symptoms like decreased memory, insomnia, inability to focus, anxiety, mood swings, irritation, etc.

Keywords: Road Safety, Head Injury, Children's safety, Road Traffic Accident

INTRODUCTION

In a country like India, where population is vast and income of maximum people is low, Road Safety is a measure concern. Especially when it comes to children.

Every year, India experiences an unusually high number of fatalities caused by Head and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI). Of these, 65 to 70 % are caused in road mishaps. The balance are due to industrial accidents, War and Counter Insurgency Operations (CI Ops), Sports field Accidents, Domestic Violence, Riots, Natural Disasters and other acts of God including even an accidental fall.

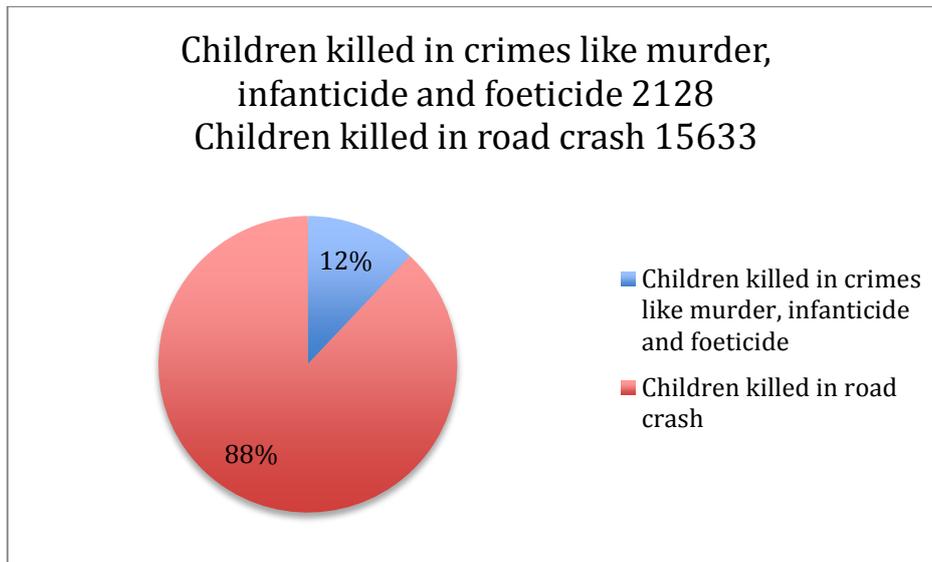
In 2015 alone, the number of officially recorded deaths was over 1, 46,000, and injured with debilitating trauma was over half a million. This toll is growing at an alarming rate with no check or respite in sight. With one percent vehicles, India carries the burden of over 10 % deaths in the world and there is a traffic accident every minute and a death every 4 minutes. In the US, the fatality rate is one out of two hundred victims of road trauma and in India it is one in six. A majority of Head Injury victims are two wheeler riders and pedestrians, and unfortunately, we have come to be termed as the “Head Injury” Capital of the world. The victims in India are mostly in the age group of 18–44 years and are often, the only “Bread Winners” for a family of 4 to 6.

Majority of these RTA victims belongs to two wheelers riders, who were without helmets while using two wheelers both as riders and pillions. Due to punitive law, adults are becoming aware and hence forced to use the helmets, but children are still deprived of it. Shockingly 15,633 children were killed in road crashes in 2015, which shows 43 deaths everyday on Indian roads. This is 635% more children died in road crashes than all other crimes committed against them put together in 2015.

Despite of many preventive measures, every year the rate of road traffic accidents are increasing. In 2016, it increased by 4.6%, which are not only unfortunate but also shocking.

CURRENT STATISTICS IN INDIA FOR CHILDREN'S ROAD SAFETY

Child Road Accidents Statistics 2015



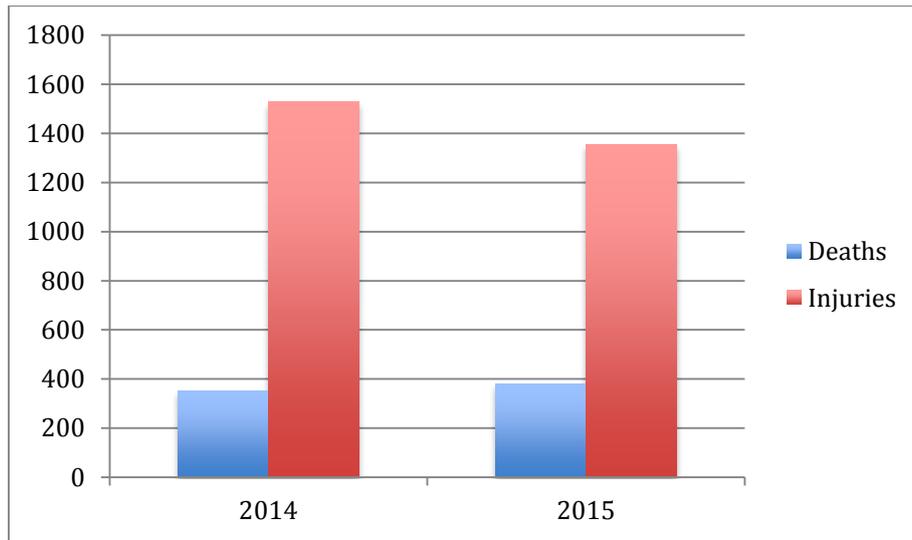
Major road accidents in India involving children

Month	Place	Fatality/Injury	Incident Report
February	Kolkata	3 killed	Run over by truck
March	Vijayawada	4 killed	Bus overturned afetr hitting a tree
June	Udupi	8 killed	Private bus collided with a school van
June	Medarametia	4 killed	Tripper truck collided stationary car
July	Bhilwada	3 Killed	Tractor trolley collides with truck
July	Balia	3 Killed	Truck runs over pavement dweller
July	Vadodara	4 killed	SUV collided with a bus
July	Bhadohi	8 killed	School van collided with a train
September	Assam-Bengal NH	4 killed	Truck ramed into a SUV
September	Amritsar	17 killed & 13 injured	School bus fell into a drain while crossing a bridge
December	Rajgarh	5 killed	A mini bus collided with an auto rikshaw

Top 5 states with highest number of child fatalities in 2015

STATE	Less than 5		6-9		10-14		15- 17		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Uttar Pradesh	0	0	217	44	642	199	989	519	2160
Bihar	48	16	144	34	268	62	484	95	1121
Haryana	19	10	128	61	254	148	289	166	1075
West Bengal	59	9	71	25	220	64	471	88	1007
Rajasthan	41	23	113	51	200	58	380	88	954

Road crashes involving school buses in India



CAUSES

Negligence, illiteracy, poverty are few of all causes behind this situation of unsafe road for our children. We all do our best to secure our kids future but just ignore the threat to their lives when they go on roads. As mentioned earlier, riders have started wearing helmets but at the same time their kids have not. It's all because of negligence. They do care of their kids but have no idea what can happen if they meet an accident.

Illiteracy is another main reason for not securing children on roads. Even after 70 years of independence, India's literacy rate has reached to 74.00% (2011 figure) only, which was 12% at the time of British Rule. Most of the people are unaware of consequences of head injury. They think, it would not happen to them unless they meet one.

Poverty also adds to the cause of not wearing helmets. Poverty is an important issue in India, despite having one of the fastest growing economies in the world, clocked at a growth of 7.6% in 2015, and a sizable consumer economy: Deutsche Bank Research estimated that there are nearly 300 million people who are middle class. If current trends continue, India's share of world GDP will significantly increase from 7.3% in 2016 to 8.5% by 2020. In 2015, around 170 million people, or 12.4%, lived in poverty (defined as \$1.90 (Rs 123.5)), a reduction from 29.8% in 2009.

In India, an ISI marked helmet costs Rs.700/- onwards. For a poor man, it is difficult to buy a helmet for their kid. So all these reasons are inter related to each other and compliment each other.

SOLUTION

The best solution to this problem is to change in our behaviour and attitude. Once that is done, we will be half way through. We will have to make sure that people are not wearing helmets to avoid penalties, but to avoid the threat to their lives.

Awareness campaign should be conducted on large scale. Also during hiring people for a job, induction program should include this Road Safety issue as their curriculum. Identifying or targeting each and every bikers would not be possible.

Here come children's role. We should target school and college going children. They are the one who go as pillion with their parents and later become a rider themselves. If we choose these children to educate on road safety program, they will make their parents also to follow the traffic rules. What we do from childhood, it becomes our habit. So if they start taking road safety measures from now, we would not need a traffic police at traffic signals for them for implementation of wearing helmets.

Keeping this mind, we at the Indian Head Injury Foundation (IHIF) has taken up this cause to save children on road crash and so to protect our future. We have already educated 25,000 children from government/ government aided/ charitable schools of Delhi. Also we have distributed around 10,000 ISI marked helmets to the children who go with their parents on two wheelers as pillions. These helmets are made and designed especially for kids from age 9 yrs to 14yrs. We are moving now to Rajasthan for same kind of road safety campaign.

There are so many government, non government and private companies, who are working for this noble cause. All we need to join hands and work together. So that impact will be more comprehensive and sustaining. As we believe, together we can achieve much more than a single hand approach



CONCLUSION

Road safety is a measure issue in India. Child restrained is totally neglected area. Road accidents cost 3% of total GDP of India. If we do not take any action, despite of achieving so much, we will stand very below in World ranking. We need to educate children, parents all those who drive two wheelers or four wheelers to save their live by following traffic rules.

Comparison of Economic loss in road crashes with budget of certain Important Ministries		
Ministry / Department	Budget 2015-16 (Rs crore)	Road crash loss in 2014 in terms of Ministry budget
Road Transport and Highways	45,752	8 times
Health and Family Welfare	32,068	12 times
Women and Child Development	10,382	37 times
Human Resource Development	69,075	5 times
Urban Development	19,217	20 times

Source: Expenditure Budget Volume II, 2015

Like we teach our kids when they are young to brush their teeth in the morning and then have anything to eat, and when they grow up, they follow this system whole life, as that becomes their habit. We have to inculcate this safety rules in them from the childhood. Gradually we will a country with 0 fatality due to road crash.



It is difficult to inculcate these safety habits in an adult that is why we have to choose our young lots to lead a safe and healthy lives ahead. They are the one who can influence the adults as well. As a parent, it's one's morale duty to instill these good civilian qualities of obeying traffic rules and others to their children, to present a good role model in front of them by themselves observing all the rules.

Government is advertising the side effects of breaking traffic rules and also including Road Safety as a part of school curriculum. Other institutes need to conduct awareness program on regular basis for school kids also private companies can get this kind of campaign done for their staff to sensitize them towards road safety and to teach them how important it is for all.

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