

India's Road Safety Crisis

Why in News?

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways declared January 2025 as Road Safety Month, calling on all stakeholders to collaborate to make roads safer.

- **Road Safety Crisis** - With approximately 11.9 lakh global road fatalities annually and road traffic crashes being the 13th largest contributor to India's health burden "between" 2009-2019.
- **Public health concern** - Road safety has emerged as a critical public health concern requiring immediate attention.
- **Key risk factors** - One of the ways to reduce road traffic injuries is to focus on key risk factors, such as speeding, not wearing helmet and seat belt, and drink driving.
- **Economic impact** - According to a World Bank report, 75% of lower-income households and 57% of higher-income households reported income decline following a crash.
- **Measures taken** - The United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030 aims to halve road deaths globally by 2030.
- India has aligned with this framework through various state-level initiatives.
- **Karnataka** - Alone accounted for 8.6% of India's road fatalities in 2022, with crash incidents increasing by 9%, fatal crashes by 7%, and grievous injuries by 18% in 2023 compared to the previous year.
- **Karnataka's Multi-Pronged Approach** - Karnataka has implemented a comprehensive strategy combining mass media campaigns with enhanced enforcement:
 - **December 2023** - Campaign addressing speeding through crash survivor stories, reaching an estimated 2.3 crore adult.
 - **January 2024** - Campaign focused on correct helmet usage.
 - **December 2024-January 2025** - Instructional campaign explaining crash science and speed impacts.
- The Karnataka model demonstrates effective policy integration between public awareness and enforcement. Police conducted targeted enforcement drives while disseminating key messages at checkpoints and through social media.
- This approach echoes successful international models like Bogotá, Colombia, where similar strategies reduced speeding.
- **Measures needed** - Sustainable road safety improvement requires shifting cultural perceptions from viewing crashes as "unavoidable accidents" to "unacceptable tragedies."
- Communication campaigns along with sound legislation and law enforcement have the most influence.
- Studies suggest that even a single, well-designed, evidence-based road safety

campaign can reduce crashes by 0.5%.

Reference

[The Hindu | Road Safety Crises](#)

