

Decade of Action for Road Safety: Trends in Road Accidents, Sri Lanka

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Abstract

At present, nearly eight people die due to road accidents each day in Sri Lanka. This amounts to over 3000 fatalities per annum. This is an increase of 35.2% when compared to the fatalities in the year 2008. During the same period, the registered number of vehicles has increased by 113%. With the rapid motorization and decrease of public transport usage which has taken place over the last decade, new trends in road accidents have emerged in Sri Lanka. The study used accident data from 2008-2017, to identify how the accident types and patterns have changed over the period. In the year 2008, most of the accidents have happened in roads classified as urban, with a percentage of 53%. By 2017, 53% of the accidents have happened on roads classified as rural. Within the period from 2008 to 2012, most of the accidents have happened between 16:00-18:00. The trend has shifted to the time period of 18:00-20:00 from 2013 onwards. During the study period, the motorcycle was the highly exposed vehicle type to accidents. Motorcycles account for 23% of the total vehicles, engaged in accidents in the year 2008. It has increased up to 27% of the total vehicles engaged in accidents in the year 2017. Most numbers of motorcycles involved accidents are pedestrian-motorcycle accidents. The percentage of motorcycle-car accidents has increased from 10% to 14% from the year 2008 to 2017. Most numbers of three-wheelers involved accidents are three wheeler-motorcycle accidents. The percentage of three wheeler-car accidents has increased from 15% to 21%, when considering three-wheeler involved accidents. The age group with the highest number of casualties is 21-30 years when considering both motorcycle and three-wheelers involved accidents. Pedestrian accidents have increased by 10% when compared to the year 2008. Among pedestrian involved accidents, pedestrian-motorcycle accidents have the highest rate in each year. The highest exposed age group for pedestrian related accidents is 41-50 years each year. It is generally around 15% of the total pedestrian accidents each year. Among lorry involved accidents, lorry-motorcycle accidents have the highest rate in each year. Lorry-motorcycle accidents have increased by 6% when compared to the year 2008. In the year 2008, most of the lorry related accidents have happened by lorry drivers within the age group of 21-30 years, which is 30% of all lorry involved accidents. By the year 2017, the trend has shifted to the age group of 31-40 years, which is 36% of all lorry involved accidents.

The study could capture two weaknesses in the accident reporting system in Sri Lanka. 99% of the accidents have been recorded without identifying probable roadway and vehicle pre-

crash factors. Results of this study will be useful input for policymakers to develop effective long term and short-term strategies to reduce road accidents.

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