**INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH**
Department of Health Research – Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India

**Press Release**

## Release of GBD India Road Injury Deaths Paper

23rd December 2019, New Delhi

The India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative released the first comprehensive population estimates of road injury deaths by type of road users in each state of India. The findings published in *The Lancet Public Health* present road injury deaths for different road users and by age and sex across the states of India. The research paper findings show that road injury was the leading cause of death in India among 15-39 year old males in 2017 and was the second leading cause for both sexes combined. More than half of all road injury deaths in India in 2017 were among pedestrians and motorcyclists. If the estimated trends of road injury deaths up to 2017 were to continue, no state in India is likely to meet the SDG 2020 target of reducing the road injury deaths by half from 2015 to 2020 or even by 2030.

At the release of the GBD India Road Injury Deaths Paper today at ICMR, Prof Balram Bhargav, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, and Director General, ICMR said, "The number of deaths due to road injury in India is quite high. This research paper focuses on providing reliable and comprehensive data in the Indian context to inform and monitor progress to reduce the burden of road injury deaths. Comprehensive findings on road injuries from this study will not only facilitate effective road safety management but would also aid in building effective road injury prevention policies, evidence-based interventions and increase surveillance of road injuries at the state-level after diagnosing and analysing the causes of injuries."

Lead author of the study Prof Rakhi Dandona from Public Health Foundation of India said, "India had 2.2 lakh deaths due to road injuries in 2017. Rapid urbanisation and economic growth in India has led to substantial increases in vehicle density and traffic mix but the infrastructure and levels of traffic law enforcement are struggling to keep

pace with it, resulting in increased number of road injury deaths. Road injury needs multi-sectorial action across three levels—to prevent crashes from occurring, to prevent injury if a crash occurs, and then to prevent death or disability among those injured. For this to happen, we need to move from the fatalistic attitude conveyed by 'accident' to prevent this needless loss of lives. Road safety for pedestrians, motorcyclists, and cyclists needs to be prioritised to ensure that the youth of our country do not face untimely death."

Dr Hendrik J Bekedam*, WHO Representative to India said, "The study findings show that road injury is the leading cause of death in young men. The passage of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 is a landmark step by the Government of India that recognizes the significance of the matter and the urgency to act. Implementation is the key to ensure that people are safe on roads. Awareness campaigns to change road user behaviour combined with effective reinforcement and further analysis of key risk factors to inform policy and action will be crucial to improve road safety in India."

Prof K Srinath Reddy*, President, Public Health Foundation of India said, "Road traffic injuries are an entirely man made epidemic which should be eliminated through a mix of good public administration for providing better roads with good lighting, strong laws and regulations with strict enforcement and penalties for violations, public education on safe practices and sane civic conduct. The fact that we are markedly off track for the 2020 target set by the SDGs sounds the siren for accelerating actions to improve road safety and putting the brakes on the deadly and disabling dangers that befall pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and automobile occupants."

Prof Christopher J L Murray* said, "India's public health community cannot ignore these high death rates among cyclists and motorcyclists. Health policy makers, transportation officials, and other key stakeholders must work collaboratively to address this problem."

The findings reported in the paper published today are part of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017. The analytical methods of this study have been refined over two decades of scientific work, which has been reported in over 16,000 peer-reviewed publications, making it the most widely used approach globally for disease burden estimation. These methods enable standardized comparisons of the health loss caused by different diseases and risk factors, between different geographies, sexes, and age groups, and over time in a unified framework. A key metric used for this comparison is disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), which are the sum of the number of years of life lost due to premature death and a weighted measure of the years lived with disability due to a disease or injury.

*Were part of the research but were not present in today's programme.

*For more details:*

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**Key findings from the research paper:**

- Of the total 219,000 road injury deaths in India in 2017, 77% were in males with the death rate three times higher compared to females.
- Motorcyclist and cyclist road injury death rate were 69% and 33% higher in India compared to the global average.
- Pedestrian road injury deaths were highest among older adults in India.
- The road traffic injury death rate was relatively higher in the less developed states compared to more developed states. This rate reduced significantly in more developed states from 1990 to 2017 but did not change in the less developed states.
- If the estimated trends of road injury deaths up to 2017 were to continue, none of the Indian states are likely to meet the SDG 2020 target of reducing the road injury deaths by half from 2015 to 2020 or even by 2030.
- Road Injury death rate in males varied 3 fold across the states of India with the highest rates in the states of Uttarakhand, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. The variations between the states for road injury death rates among the different types of road users were even higher at 4-8 fold.
- The highest road injury death rates among females were in the states of Manipur, Jharkhand and Punjab.
- Appropriate measures such as promoting evidence-based interventions, enforcing strong policies and stringent traffic laws will reduce the road injury deaths, which could help India achieve the SDG 2020 target at least by 2030.
- More attention to reduce the vulnerable road user injury deaths (pedestrians, motorcyclists, and cyclists) in India is expected following the recent enactment of the Motor Vehicle Act 2019 that imposes strict penalties against traffic violations which is expected to facilitate better monitoring of road injury events.
- Evidence-based road safety interventions, multi-sectorial approaches, strong policies, law enforcement and enhancing the role of the health system to deal with injuries are needed in each state of India to meet the SDG target of reducing road injury deaths.