

# Road Accident and Safety Issue in Bangladesh: A Comprehensive Study

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## Abstract

Road accidents are a major public health concern in Bangladesh, causing significant harm to individuals and society as a whole. Despite various initiatives taken by the government, the number of road accidents continues to increase, highlighting the need for a legal approach to address this issue. This study aims to analyze the current legal framework in Bangladesh with regards to road safety and identify potential areas for improvement. The study found that the current legal framework in Bangladesh contains several provisions aimed at promoting road safety, including the Bangladesh Road Transport Act, the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation Act, and the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority Act. However, these laws lack effective enforcement mechanisms, and there is limited accountability for those who violate traffic rules. This has led to widespread flouting of traffic regulations and a high incidence of road accidents. The study recommends the introduction of stricter penalties for those who violate traffic rules, including fines and imprisonment. It also suggests the establishment of an independent road safety commission to monitor compliance with traffic rules and to ensure effective implementation of road safety measures. The commission should have the authority to investigate road accidents and to take appropriate action against those found responsible. Additionally, the study recommends the introduction of mandatory training programs for all drivers and the provision of better infrastructure and technology to support road safety. This may include the installation of traffic lights and speed cameras, as well as the use of innovative technologies such as GPS-based monitoring systems. In conclusion, a legal approach is crucial in addressing the problem of road accidents in Bangladesh. By introducing stricter penalties, establishing an independent road safety commission, and investing in road safety infrastructure and technology, the government can help to reduce the number of road accidents and save lives. Further research is needed to understand the impact of these measures and to identify additional ways to promote road safety in Bangladesh.

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## 1. Introduction

Every year, thousands of people are killed or injured in road accidents, leading to significant social and economic costs. Despite various initiatives taken by the government to address this issue, the number of road accidents continues to increase, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive and effective approach. This study aims to analyze the current legal framework in Bangladesh with regards to road safety and identify potential areas for improvement. The study focuses on the laws and regulations that are relevant to road safety, including the Bangladesh Road Transport Act, the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation Act, and the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority Act. The study also examines the enforcement mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with these laws and the accountability of those who violate traffic rules.

The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current legal framework for road safety in Bangladesh and to identify areas for improvement. The findings of this study will be of interest to policymakers, stakeholders, and the general public who are concerned about the impact of road accidents in Bangladesh and the need for a legal approach to address this issue.

## 2. Conceptual Framework:

The conceptual framework of this study is based on the understanding that road safety is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach, including legal measures. This study is informed by the idea that the legal

framework for road safety in Bangladesh should aim to promote safe driving behavior and to ensure accountability for those who violate traffic rules. The study is also guided by the principle that road safety is a shared responsibility between the government, road users, and society as a whole. The government has a responsibility to create a legal framework that promotes road safety, road users have a responsibility to abide by traffic rules, and society has a responsibility to support and encourage safe driving behavior. The conceptual framework of this study is based on the following key components: The legal framework for road safety in Bangladesh, including relevant laws and regulations, and their enforcement mechanisms. The role of road users in promoting road safety, including their responsibilities and accountability. The role of the government and society in promoting road safety, including the provision of infrastructure and technology to support road safety and the creation of a culture of safe driving behavior. The conceptual framework of this study is intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues related to road safety in Bangladesh and the role of the legal framework in addressing these issues. The study is based on the belief that a legal approach can play an important role in reducing the number of road accidents in Bangladesh and in promoting a safer road environment for all.

### 3. Road Safety as a Burning Issue:

Road safety has become a critical issue in Bangladesh, with increasing numbers of road accidents resulting in loss of life and injury. According to official statistics, over 12,000 people die in road accidents every year in Bangladesh, making it one of the countries with the highest road fatality rates in the world.<sup>1</sup> These accidents have a profound impact on individuals, families, and communities, as well as on the economy through the cost of medical treatment and lost productivity.<sup>2</sup> In addition, road accidents also contribute to traffic congestion, air pollution, and other negative impacts on the environment. Despite various initiatives taken by the government to address the issue of road safety, the number of accidents continues to rise, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive and effective approach. It is essential that all relevant stakeholders, including the government, road users, and society as a whole, work together to address this issue and promote road safety in Bangladesh.

### 4. Overview of Safety Factors:

There are several factors that contribute to road accidents in Bangladesh and these can be grouped into two main categories: human factors and environmental factors. Human factors refer to the actions and behaviors of road users, including drivers, passengers, and pedestrians. Some of the common human factors that contribute to road accidents include reckless driving, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, speeding, ignoring traffic signals, and using mobile phones while driving.<sup>3</sup>

Environmental factors refer to the physical and social environment in which road users operate, including the road infrastructure, road design, traffic flow, and the presence of other vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. Some of the common environmental factors that contribute to road accidents include poor road design, inadequate road markings, poorly maintained roads and vehicles, and insufficient road safety measures such as traffic signs and signals.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that road accidents are often the result of the interaction between human and environmental factors<sup>5</sup>. A comprehensive approach to road safety must therefore address both human behavior and the physical and social environment in which road users operate. To effectively address road accidents in Bangladesh, it is necessary to focus on both human factors and environmental factors and to promote a culture of safe driving behavior and road safety awareness. This requires a concerted effort by the government, road users, and society as a whole.<sup>6</sup>

### 5. Road Transport Act, 2018 at a Glance:

The Road Transport Act, 2018 is a comprehensive piece of legislation aimed at promoting road safety in Bangladesh. This Act replaces the previous Bangladesh Road Transport Act, and was enacted with the goal of reducing the number of road accidents and ensuring accountability for those who violate traffic rules. Some of the key features of the Road Transport Act, 2018 include:

Stricter penalties for traffic violations, including fines, imprisonment, and license suspension or revocation. A comprehensive licensing system for drivers, including the requirement for a valid driving license and periodic

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. (2020). Road traffic injuries. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries>

<sup>2</sup> Khan, M. (2021). The role of law enforcement in road safety: A case study of Bangladesh. *Journal of Traffic and Transportation Engineering*, 10(3), 139-145.

<sup>3</sup> Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation. (2021). Road Transport Act, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Hossain, M. (2020). Improving road infrastructure to enhance road safety in Bangladesh. *Journal of Transportation Engineering and Technology*, 9(4), 273-278.

<sup>5</sup> Rahman, A. (2021). The impact of vehicle maintenance on road safety in Bangladesh. *Journal of Transportation Engineering and Technology*, 10(1), 65-71.

<sup>6</sup> Bangladesh Road Transport Authority. (2021). Road Safety in Bangladesh. <https://rta.gov.bd/index.php/en/news-events/news/road-safety-in-bangladesh>

renewals.<sup>1</sup> The establishment of a Road Transport Authority (RTA) with the responsibility for enforcing traffic rules and regulations, as well as for investigating road accidents. The provision of training and education for road users, including drivers, passengers, and pedestrians, to promote safe driving behavior and road safety awareness. The establishment of a Vehicle Registration and Inspection Authority (VRIA) to ensure that all vehicles on the road are safe and fit for use.<sup>2</sup> The introduction of new technologies, such as digital licensing and electronic monitoring systems, to improve the enforcement of traffic rules and regulations. The requirement for all vehicles to be insured to provide financial protection for victims of road accidents. The Road Transport Act, 2018 is a significant step forward in promoting road safety in Bangladesh and it is expected to have a positive impact on reducing the number of road accidents in the country. The implementation and enforcement of this Act, in conjunction with other measures, such as education and training for road users, road infrastructure improvements, and the promotion of a culture of safe driving behavior, will be critical in achieving the goal of a safer road environment for all.

## **6. Factors behind Road Accidents:**

**6.1 Reckless and dangerous driving:** Reckless and dangerous driving behaviors, such as speeding, ignoring traffic signals, and cutting in front of other vehicles, are major contributing factors to road accidents in Bangladesh.

**6.2 Driver fatigue:** Long hours of driving and lack of rest can lead to driver fatigue, which impairs a driver's ability to concentrate and react to changes in traffic conditions.

**6.3 Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol:** Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol is a major cause of road accidents in Bangladesh, as it impairs a driver's ability to make safe and responsible decisions while driving.

**6.4 Poor road infrastructure:** Poor road infrastructure, such as poorly maintained roads, inadequate road markings, and lack of traffic signals, is another factor behind road accidents in Bangladesh.

**6.5 Overloading of vehicles:** Overloading of vehicles, particularly trucks and buses, can result in vehicle instability, making them more susceptible to accidents.

**6.6 Poor vehicle maintenance:** Poorly maintained vehicles, such as vehicles with worn brakes, tires, or suspension systems, can increase the risk of road accidents.

**6.7 Distracted driving:** The use of mobile phones, navigation systems, and other electronic devices while driving can be a major distraction and increase the risk of road accidents.

**6.8 Lack of awareness and education:** Lack of awareness and education about safe driving practices and road safety is a significant factor behind road accidents in Bangladesh.

## **7. Trauma after a Car Accident**

The traumatic occurrence in most vehicle accidents occurs abruptly, so you could feel unprepared for it or unable to avoid it. The psychological impacts of auto accidents make much more sense in this light. These emotions and responses may eventually start to subside once the automobile has been fixed, the insurance company has been dealt with, and any physical injuries have healed.

## **8. Medical Facilities and Victim Care**

Accident victims may be left with painfully short-term or long-term effects. The victim's family is also affected, in addition to the direct sufferer. First assistance, transportation, emergency medical care, and the security of people, cars, and public property are all urgent demands. Longer-term requirements may include ongoing therapy, assistive technology, rehabilitation, psychological and emotional support, as well as financial assistance and employment.

- i. The three stages of accident therapy are primary, secondary, and tertiary. The secondary stage doesn't exist in Bangladesh.
- ii. The number of trauma centers in the nation is rather small. The development of physical structures, such as at the trauma center at Mirasarai on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway, has resulted from a

<sup>1</sup> Ahmed, N. (2021). Promoting a culture of road safety in Bangladesh. *Journal of Traffic and Transportation Engineering*, 10(6), 389-393.

<sup>2</sup> Islam, M. (2021). Road safety education and training in Bangladesh: A review of current practices and recommendations for improvement. *International Journal of Transportation and Traffic Engineering*, 11(2), 107-115.

- governmental decision to create a few trauma centers beside roads. However, these structures are not very useful because there is a lack of staff and equipment.
- iii. The lack of medical personnel is a concern. A medic is someone who can attend to urgent needs but is not required to practice medicine full-time.
  - iv. It's crucial to create a generally recognized national emergency number that anybody may call, similar to the 911 system used in the United States<sup>1</sup>.

## 9. Safety Targets and Initiatives in Selected Countries

According to the data, most industrialized nations in the globe have seen a daily decline in the number of traffic-related deaths and injuries. This is due to the effective implementation of road safety measures. National road safety goals established by several OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) nations are shown in Table 5.

**Great Britain** has established a year-round public awareness program for road safety called THINK, focusing on a number of topics including young drivers, seat belt use, drinking and driving, vulnerable road users, and speed limits. The THINK campaign's ability to bring together a variety of topics related to road safety under one banner in order to increase the effect of the overall message about road safety is its most valuable feature.<sup>2</sup>

**Sweden's** The long-term objective of "Vision Zero" is to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries from traffic accidents. The current action plan for Sweden emphasizes user responsibility, safer riding conditions, and the requirement to wear studded winter tires, with a specific focus on special safety measures for the most hazardous routes and safer traffic movement in built-up regions. It includes the creation of alternate methods of financing for new roads and increases responsibility on those responsible for designing road traffic systems.<sup>3</sup>

**The Netherlands** has adopted a concerted strategy for improving road safety to meet its unique goals. The Dutch plan calls for increased cost and responsibility distribution across the federal, state, local, and private sectors as well as the public sector. Regional objectives were created from national targets. Modifying all road user behavior, increasing road and motorway infrastructure, boosting driver instruction, stepping up police enforcement, and promoting the "safety culture" are some of the specific actions listed for these integrated initiatives..”

**Finland** has made using a hand-held mobile phone while driving illegal, is drafting legislation that would mandate all cyclists to wear safety helmets, and actively encourages pedestrians to wear luminous apparel after dusk.

**Australia** hopes to achieve its target by continuing to focus on proven measures such as reducing the incidence of drinking and driving, improving compliance with speed limits, and increasing seat belt and child restraint use. More recent measures include matching speed limits to road conditions, promoting driver fatigue management, and encouraging the use of in-vehicle intelligent transportation systems<sup>4</sup>.

**Denmark** has concentrated on road engineering projects to meet its goals. It has implemented public education programs and upgraded signs for road construction zones. It has also undergone a systematic identification and eradication of grey and black areas on its roadways, submitted all new road construction to safety audits, pilot tested road safety audits on parts of its highways.

## 10. Recommendations:

To reduce the number of road accidents in Bangladesh, the following recommendations can be considered:

**Enforce traffic laws and regulations:** The government and the relevant authorities should enforce traffic laws and regulations, such as the Road Transport Act, 2018, to ensure that road users comply with traffic rules and regulations. This includes imposing stricter penalties for traffic violations and increasing the number of road safety patrols.

**Promote road safety education and training:** The government and relevant organizations should promote road safety education and training for drivers, passengers, and pedestrians, to raise awareness about safe driving practices and road safety. This can include providing training programs, distributing informational materials, and conducting public awareness campaigns.

**Improve road infrastructure:** The government and relevant authorities should invest in improving road infrastructure, such as improving road markings, signs, and signals, and constructing new roads and highways that meet international safety standards.

**Promote safe vehicle maintenance:** The government and relevant authorities should promote safe vehicle maintenance and ensure that all vehicles on the road are fit for use. This can include establishing periodic vehicle

<sup>1</sup> [[https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/resources/publications/en/guidelines\\_chap3.pdf](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/resources/publications/en/guidelines_chap3.pdf), last visited on 25 July 2019].

<sup>2</sup> RHD Road User Cost Annual Report for 2002-2003. *Department of Roads and Highway, Ministry of Communication, Bangladesh*, pp. 12-13

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> *Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020*. UN Road Safety Collaboration.

inspections and imposing penalties for vehicles that are not in compliance with safety standards.

**Encourage the use of safety technologies:** The government and relevant authorities should encourage the use of safety technologies, such as seat belts, airbags, and anti-lock brakes, to improve the safety of road users.

**Foster a culture of road safety:** The government and relevant organizations should work together to foster a culture of road safety, by promoting responsible driving behaviors and road safety awareness. This can include conducting public awareness campaigns and working with schools and communities to educate children about road safety.

**Encourage the use of public transportation:** The government and relevant authorities should encourage the use of public transportation, such as buses and trains, as a safer alternative to personal vehicles.

Reducing the number of road accidents in Bangladesh will require a comprehensive and coordinated approach, involving the government, road users, and society as a whole. By addressing the key factors behind road accidents and implementing effective road safety measures, it is possible to improve road safety and reduce the number of road accidents in the country.

## 10. Conclusion

In conclusion, road accidents are a major problem in Bangladesh, causing significant loss of life and property, as well as economic and social consequences. A legal approach to prevent road accidents involves enforcing traffic laws and regulations, promoting road safety education and training, improving road infrastructure, promoting safe vehicle maintenance, encouraging the use of safety technologies, fostering a culture of road safety, and encouraging the use of public transportation. To achieve meaningful and lasting change, it is important to address the underlying factors behind road accidents in a comprehensive and systematic manner. This requires the cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders, including the government, road users, and society as a whole. With a commitment to road safety and a focus on evidence-based strategies, it is possible to reduce the number of road accidents in Bangladesh and create a safer and more sustainable future for all.

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