

Road Safety in Bengaluru: A Growing Urban Challenge

Bengaluru's rapid urbanisation has transformed it into one of India's most dynamic cities. However, this growth has come with a significant cost—**increasing road accidents and rising safety concerns**. As traffic volumes surge and the city expands outward, road safety is emerging as a critical challenge that demands urgent attention.

A Pattern, Not an Exception

Recent incidents across Bengaluru are a stark reminder that road crashes are not isolated events, but part of a larger and more concerning pattern.

Earlier this year, a devastating multi-vehicle crash near Hoskote on the outskirts of the city claimed **seven lives, including young students**. In the early hours of the morning, a speeding SUV travelling at over **150 km/h** rammed into a motorcycle, lost control, and crashed into a truck—triggering a chain collision within seconds.

What makes this incident particularly alarming is not just the scale of loss, but what it represents:

- **Extreme over-speeding** on peri-urban corridors
- Risks associated with **young and inexperienced drivers**
- High crash severity on **expanding urban fringes**
- Lack of adequate **speed control and enforcement mechanisms**

This tragedy illustrates how a single moment of negligence, combined with high speeds and inadequate safeguards, can escalate into a fatal, multi-vehicle disaster.

Other recent incidents further reinforce this concern. A woman lost her life after her scooter skidded on a road under repair near the **airport corridor**, highlighting the dangers of **poorly managed work zones**. Similarly, everyday risks such as potholes, inadequate lighting, and lack of pedestrian infrastructure continue to endanger commuters across the city.

These are not isolated cases—they are symptoms of systemic gaps in infrastructure, enforcement, and road user behaviour.

From Incident to Insight: What the Data Tells Us

The scale of the issue becomes clearer when we look at the data.

Bengaluru records **nearly 900 road fatalities every year**, translating to **2–3 deaths every day**. An overview of road accident trends over the past three years is presented below:

Accident Cases Registered in Bengaluru City from 2023 to 2026 (*Upto Mar)					
Year	Total Accidents	Fatal	Killed	Non Fatal	Injured
2023	4974	882	910	4092	4191
2024	4769	869	894	3900	4022
2025	4893	843	878	4050	4272
*2026	1393	259	277	1134	1224

Source: <https://btp.karnataka.gov.in/231/accident-statistics>

Despite various interventions, these numbers have remained **largely unchanged over recent years**, indicating that improvements in safety have not kept pace with the city's growth.

A closer look at the data reveals key trends:

- **Vulnerable road users**—especially pedestrians and two-wheeler riders—account for a significant share of fatalities
- **Overspeeding** continues to be the leading cause of fatal crashes
- Severe accidents are more frequent on **arterial roads, highways, and peri-urban corridors**

The Hoskote crash, in this context, is not an anomaly—it is a **high-severity representation of everyday risks present across the road network**.

Understanding the Root Causes

Road accidents in Bengaluru are driven by a combination of behavioural, infrastructural, and systemic factors:

i. Overspeeding and Risky Driving Behaviour

High-speed driving drastically reduces reaction time and increases the severity of crashes. Late-night and early-morning hours often see reduced enforcement, leading to higher risk-taking.

ii. Inadequate Road Infrastructure

- Poorly maintained roads and potholes
- Lack of signage and lighting
- Unsafe construction and maintenance zones

iii. Weak Pedestrian and NMT Infrastructure

The absence of continuous footpaths, safe crossings, and cycling infrastructure puts vulnerable users at constant risk.

iv. Mixed Traffic Conditions

The coexistence of pedestrians, two-wheelers, autos, and heavy vehicles without proper segregation leads to unpredictable traffic behaviour.

v. Rapid Urban Expansion

As the city expands into peripheral areas, high-speed corridors are being used without adequate safety measures, increasing the likelihood of severe crashes.

Why Road Safety Must Be a Planning Priority

Road safety is not just a transport issue—it is a **public health and urban planning concern**.

Each accident results in:

- **Loss of life and livelihoods**
- **Emotional and social impact on families**
- **Economic losses due to reduced productivity and healthcare costs**

For a city like Bengaluru, ensuring safe mobility is essential to sustaining its growth and livability.

The Way Forward: Towards Safer Streets

Addressing road safety requires a **3-E and data-driven approach**:

Engineering Interventions

- Safer intersection design and traffic calming measures
- Dedicated pedestrian and cycling infrastructure
- Improved signage, lighting, and work zone management

Enforcement Measures

- Strict speed monitoring through cameras and patrols
- Penalising violations such as rash driving and wrong-way movement
- Increased vigilance during high-risk hours

Education and Awareness

- Campaigns promoting responsible driving behaviour
- Focus on young drivers and first-time vehicle users
- Encouraging helmet and seatbelt compliance

Data-Driven Planning

- Identification and treatment of accident blackspots
- Use of traffic studies and simulations to guide design decisions
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation of interventions

Conclusion

The recent accidents in Bengaluru, including the tragic Hoskote crash, serve as a powerful reminder that **road safety cannot be overlooked in the pursuit of urban growth**.

A safer city is not defined by the speed of its roads, but by how well it protects its people.

As planners, engineers, and stakeholders, the responsibility lies in creating systems that prioritise human life above all else. Moving forward, integrating safety into every stage of planning and design will be key to building a resilient and livable urban future.