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ACCIDENT STATISTICS IN SRI LANKA

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1. INTRODUCTION

The total population had risen from 14.8 million to 18.7 million between 1981 and 2001, and the population growth is reducing and comparatively small about 1.10%, as shown in Table 1. The census, which was scheduled for 1991, could not be conducted due to unsettled condition in Sri Lanka. The census in 2001 which is the 13th in the series was conducted after a time-lag of 20 years, where population statistics were officially taken with certain limitations. More than population increases; the increasing fleets have had a damaging effect on the number of road accident in Sri Lanka. The vehicle population has risen from 0.213 million in 1977 to 1.78 million in 2001. Over 1.06 million motor vehicle of all varieties were registered during the period between 1990 and 2001. The total number of vehicles registered in 2003 was 2,073,869, and in year 2004 this increased to 2,297,711, with by an increase of 223,842. A sharp increase was observed in the motorcycles segment, where there were 86,877 registrations in 2003 and increased to 124,474 in year 2004. Moreover, there is an extraordinarily increases in number of three-wheelers, a mode of Paratransit providing door-to-door service, between 1994 and 2001, and currently about 240,000 three-wheelers in operation in the Island, and from year 2001 there is again a sharp increase in registration with 36,204 in 2003, and again 43,789 in 2004. In comparison, sales of cars have dropped slightly with most of the public preferring to buy motorbikes and dual-purpose vehicles instead. The total numbers of car registration in 2003 were 211,084 and this dropped to 119,116 in year 2004, and has been attributed to the controversial tax which was introduced in year 2004. But during last two decade approximately 25,000 km road were added to the national grid, mostly in rural areas.

2. ROAD ACCIDENTS

As a result of the two factors such as increases in number of vehicles and very poor development of road

infrastructure, the traffic accident in Sri Lanka shows an ever increasing trend and the alarming numbers of fatality as shown in Table 2.

The number of reported accidents to the Police has increased from 26,196 in 1989 to 52,444 in 2005. In 1989 a total of 1,454 fatal accidents were reported and 2,141 were reported in 2005. However, it should be noted that these figures were based on the total accidents, which were reported to the Police. But, normally most of the minor accidents are not reported to the police, and many of the damage only accidents are settled amicably by both parties.

3. ROAD USERS INVOLVED IN ACCIDENTS

The total number of fatalities and fatalities among different road users are given in Table 3. Similarly, the total number of causalities and the causalities of among different road users are given in Table 4. In these tables the drivers means the drivers of a vehicle having three or more wheels and passengers means the commuters travelled in a vehicle having three or more wheels. The others includes road side business person run over by a vehicle and so on. Developed regression model for five-year average data revealed most vulnerable group was the drivers with a higher rate of death (192.34 percentage increase per decade) and extremely higher rate of causality (332.1 percentage increase per decade).

4. VEHICLE INVOLVEMENT IN ACCIDENTS

In Sri Lanka, there are seven types of vehicle registrations are made such as motor cars, three wheelers, motor cycles, dual purpose vehicles (Vehicles such as Toyota's Hiace or Nissan's Caravan, jeeps, etc), lorries, land and longer (container transport vehicles) and buses. The following accident record, as given in Table 5 is available with the Police headquarters for the period till 2003. The other vehicles in column 10 in Table 5, includes the longer vehicles, containers, tractors, land

Table 1 Population statistics in Sri Lanka

Year	1953	1963	1971	1981	2001
Population	8,097,845	10,582,064	12,689,897	14,846,750	18,732,255
Ave. Annual Growth Rate (%)	2.84	2.65	2.20	1.67	1.10

Source: Website of the Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka

Table 2 Number of reported accidents in Sri Lanka (unit=cases)

Year	Fatal Accidents	Grievous (Accidents involving serious injuries)	Non-Grievous (Accidents involving slight injuries)	Damage Only (Property damage only involving no casualties)	Total Accidents
1989	1,454	1,287	2,233	21,222	26,196
1990	1,714	1,703	9,462	21,584	34,463
1991	1,255	1,899	9,685	21,305	34,144
1992	1,302	2,112	10,386	23,977	37,777
1993	1,346	2,299	1,687	26,163	31,495
1994	1,414	2,554	11,992	27,855	43,815
1995	1,481	2,588	12,233	31,837	48,139
1996	1,560	2,615	11,510	32,990	48,675
1997	1,705	3,310	10,037	34,481	48,533
1998	1,874	2,393	14,417	35,275	50,959
1999	1,913	3,144	16,258	34,129	55,444
2000	1,992	3,006	11,765	16,724	54,250
2001	1,952	3,413	11,560	16,109	52,092
2002	2,029	3,719	12,935	36,348	55,031
2003	1,933	3,919	13,744	39,848	59,444
2004	2,116	4,560	13,918	32,864	53,458
2005	2,141	4,968	14,376	21,686	43,171

Source: Police Headquarters, Colombo, 2006

Table 3 Number of fatalities by road user type (unit=people)

Year	Total number of fatalities	Pedestrians	Passengers	Cyclists (bicycle riders)	Riders (motorcycle riders)	Drivers	Others (such as roadside businessman)
1989	1,596	648	417	224	226	77	4
1990	1,795	686	417	265	324	96	7
1991	1,532	542	529	195	181	85	0
1992	1,515	528	485	231	187	84	0
1993	1,421	603	304	222	208	65	19
1994	1,611	586	438	217	220	147	3
1995	1,681	636	366	246	244	177	12
1996	1,755	753	354	153	272	192	31
1997	1,835	662	347	251	244	319	12
1998	2,023	814	367	238	232	294	78
1999	2,059	713	358	307	172	288	221
2000	2,058	827	470	306	237	213	5
2001	2,118	791	431	338	294	261	3
2002	2,160	750	380	317	451	188	74
2003	2,096	747	397	311	281	171	71
2004	2,214	748	381	298	385	194	208
2005	2,304	747	428	326	406	178	221

Source: Police Headquarters, Colombo, 2006

masters, and small motorized rolling stock. The unspecified vehicle category in column 11 includes carts, hit and run vehicles and so on. The reported total vehicle involvement in accidents was increased until 2000 and then slightly fluctuating downward. Main reason for this was due to under reporting that aroused from introduced new insurance policy by few insurance companies. One policy called 'on the spot' which has the capacity to pay

the compensation without any lengthy procedure. Prior to this policy, an accident report from the Police should be submitted for receiving compensation.

The number of government buses under the Sri Lanka transport board (SLTB) had shown a decreasing trend in its numbers and operations. However, due to recent public pressure, since 2005, there are many SLTB buses were imported to strengthen the public transporta-

Table 4 Number of casualties by road user type (unit=people)

Year	Total number of casualties	Pedestrians	Passengers	Cyclists (bicycle riders)	Riders (motorcycle riders)	Drivers	Others
1989	12,376	4,509	3,264	1,736	2,120	717	30
1990	15,824	5,896	3,855	2,101	3,071	853	48
1991	15,227	5,976	4,230	2,165	2,095	761	0
1992	16,492	6,152	4,089	2,343	3,103	805	0
1993	18,603	6,743	4,345	2,678	3,610	1,098	129
1994	20,225	6,848	5,921	2,657	2,991	1,650	158
1995	21,684	7,240	5,503	2,681	3,897	2,155	208
1996	21,625	7,510	5,678	2,669	2,808	2,686	274
1997	21,359	6,693	4,974	2,567	3,370	3,041	714
1998	20,218	6,862	3,585	2,511	3,170	2,814	1,276
1999	29,299	8,572	8,712	3,009	3,667	3,371	1,968
2000	21,916	7,169	6,134	2,461	3,288	2,804	60
2001	22,676	6,995	6,226	2,773	3,655	3,003	24

Source: Police Headquarters, Colombo, 2006

Table 5 Number of vehicles involved in accidents by vehicle type (unit=vehicles)

Year	Total Number of Vehicles Involved	Car	Motor Cycle	Light Vehicle	Lorries	Private Bus	SLTB Bus	Pedal Cycle	Other vehicles	Not Specified vehicles
1989	51,820	16,546	6,883	7,756	8,422	5,525	3,083	2,527	289	789
1990	55,622	16,672	9,122	8,234	8,858	5,978	3,077	2,996	685	0
1991	55,330	14,953	9,006	8,200	8,658	7,714	2,872	3,094	833	0
1992	61,893	16,404	9,036	10,288	8,571	9,385	3,036	3,480	1,693	0
1993	67,039	15,185	9,678	12,678	9,593	9,684	3,150	3,886	3,185	0
1994	72,348	16,058	9,500	14,693	10,636	9,896	3,452	3,774	3,473	866
1995	79,850	16,885	9,238	17,141	12,474	9,957	4,265	3,839	4,487	1,564
1996	76,634	15,677	8,317	18,177	11,456	8,641	3,641	3,343	5,429	1,953
1997	84,732	16,128	8,322	21,965	12,537	9,701	3,598	3,471	7,058	1,952
1998	84,589	15,207	7,788	23,843	12,674	11,052	2,482	3,252	8,014	277
1999	87,814	15,921	11,772	16,666	11,003	13,338	2,781	2,542	12,434	1,357
2000	91,984	17,370	7,932	25,127	14,142	12,416	2,045	3,103	8,522	1,327
2001	79,069	18,296	8,457	22,364	12,747	11,816	1,890	3,340	140	19
2002	55,031	6,821	6,768	15,804	7,333	8,398	-	1,530	1,291	778
2003	89,177	20,540	10,713	24,841	14,011	9,738	2,746	-	-	6,588

Source: Police Headquarters, Colombo, 2006

tion services. Since year 2004, the traffic accident data on the number of vehicles involved in accident by vehicle categories changed its form of recording. In years 2004 and 2005 the vehicles responsible for road accident were grouped by vehicle categories such as buses, lorries, containers, motor cars, motor cycles, dual purpose vehicles, jeeps, vans, three wheelers, pedal cycles, land vehicles, hit-and-run groups, which will be reported in near future.

5. CONCLUSION

This statistical data shows the rate of increase in

total number of accidents. Traffic police is continued to control this alarming rate of accidents. Main reason for this rapid increase is due to alarming rate of vehicle ownership together with inadequate road network development to support the demand.

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