

## ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN THE KANDY POLICE AREA

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Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) became a main cause of morbidity and mortality for the first in the twentieth century. As in other countries, RTAs have become a major public health problem in Sri Lanka due to the increase in the number of motor vehicles imported and being put onto the road system which had not virtually expanded. This is more so in the Kandy Police Area (KPA) as a number of existing roads were closed for traffic due to security reasons. The lack of interest on this subject is seen by the lack of literature on the subject, especially for this area.

This study was therefore conducted in the KPA, the administrative area of the Kandy Police (KP), from 1<sup>st</sup> October 1998 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 1999 and included all the Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) which were reported to the KP during the period of study.

The general objective was to study the reported RTAs in the Kandy Police Area (KPA). The traffic police data was used for this study.

There were 949 RTAs, which included 1817 road users and 61 non-vehicular road structures such as lamp posts, walls, culverts etc. Of these RTAs, 9 (0.9%) were fatal 64 (6.7%) were grievous and 208 (22.0%) were non-grievous accidents while the other 668 (70.4%) were accidents which only caused damage to vehicle/property only.

Of the injury causing accidents 179 (63.6%) were vehicle pedestrian accidents and showed the risk the pedestrians run in the traffic environment. Of the 49 (17.4%) vehicle passenger accidents, 31 (63.3%) involved a passenger bus.

The injury causing accidents caused death or injury to 353 road user. The commonest road user to be injured was the pedestrian (53.6%) followed by the passenger (27.2%). These accidents killed ten (2.8%) and grievously injured 75 (21.2%) road user.

Since road user error was identified as the main cause of these RTAs, in the prevention of them this has to be addressed. One important, practical and affordable measure in this aspect is the prevention of the pedestrians coming into contact with the motor vehicle. Therefore, keeping the pedestrians away from the road areas reserved for vehicular traffic as far as possible is the main recommendation of this study. As a majority of passengers were injured while travelling on a bus, regularising the public transport service also could help in the reduction of morbidity and mortality from RTAs.