



National study by SaveLIFE Foundation and Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India highlights gaps in road safety for children

Press Information

October 07, 2021

The study titled 'National Study on Safe Commute to School' highlights existing challenges and the need to improve road safety in India

Bangalore, October 07, 2021: SaveLIFE Foundation in collaboration with **Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India (MBRDI)** today announced findings from its new study titled '**National Study on Safe Commute to School**'. The study reviews the existing status of school transport together with bringing out the challenges and areas of improvement.

The study conducted after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, analyses responses from **11,845 respondents**, including 5,711 children (of classes 6-12) and 6,134 parents (with children in classes 1-12) **across 14 cities in India** with the intent of gathering insights across age-groups and geographies to inform how we can improve the road safety of children while they commute to school. The cities surveyed include Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Jamshedpur, Kanpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Patna, Pune, and Vijayawada.

"Safety is a seminal part of the Mercedes-Benz's philosophy. At MBRDI, our endeavour is to create awareness in making the roads safer for everyone in our community. With our global initiative MobileKids, which has been running for four years now here in India, shows our commitment to enhance road safety for children and thus provide valuable educational work," said **Manu Saale, Managing Director and CEO, MBRDI**. "The findings from this study show unequivocally the raising need for road safety in the country. We hope that this study will help all stakeholders further extend our vision of zero casualties to all modes of road transport," he added.

As per this study, 47% of the surveyed respondents using school transport admitted to their school vehicles not being equipped with seat belts. Additionally, 34% of the respondents using two-wheelers surveyed had not ensured their child/they were wearing a helmet while commuting via two-wheelers. It also emerged that a worrying 30% of children witnessed a crash during their commute to school, while 6% of them were themselves involved in a road crash or a near-miss situation during their commute to and from school. This finding is significant given over 30 children lose their lives on India's roads every day¹.

¹ https://morth.nic.in/sites/default/files/RA_Updating.pdf

Additionally, more than half of the parents surveyed stated that school authorities took no action on the safety concerns reported to the school authorities. These issues included overcrowding in school vehicles, congestion near the school, and over-speeding by drivers in the school zone.

The study also highlighted gaps in the safety standards of school zones too. 47% of the surveyed respondents whose child/who cycled to school reported no cycling paths en route or even around the school. 30% of those whose child/who walked to school reported missing footpaths around the school zone. It has been observed that adherence to guidelines among private transport users is lower than school-provided transport. The study has proposed some programs to build awareness among parents to equip them to ensure that schools adhere to safety norms.

SaveLIFE Foundation Founder & CEO, Piyush Tewari, said, “As of date, over 25 states and Union Territories have announced the reopening of schools. While there is a vaccine for COVID, the vaccine for child deaths on our roads is really our collective action. Our findings through this report have once again emphasised that the right to a safe commute to school is as important as the right to education itself. A comprehensive national and state school transport safety policy can ensure that.”

Children face a high degree of risk while commuting to and from school due to poor road planning, limited enforcement and poor traffic behaviour. According to data provided by the Ministry of Roads Transport and Highways (MoRTH), over 11,000 children below the age of 18 were killed in road crashes in 2019 in India. This translates to over 30 deaths daily, with a 7.4% contribution to the total road crash deaths².

*Note for Editors: [Link to the report](#)

For further information:

MBRDI

Tanuja Singh | Tanuja.singh@daimler.com | +91 98806 77071

Ila Malla | ila.malla@genesis-bcw.com | +91 6366 945 060

SaveLIFE Foundation

Karuna Raina | kraina@savelifefoundation.org | + 91 9810790994

Silky Chandwani | silky.chandwani@genesis-bcw.com | +91 9815308250

Maryam Raja | maryam.raja@genesis-bcw.com | +91 9711017410

About Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India (MBRDI)

Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India (MBRDI) headquartered in Bengaluru was founded in 1996 as a captive unit to support Daimler’s research, IT, and product development activities. We focus on topics ranging from computer-

² https://morth.nic.in/sites/default/files/RA_Uploading.pdf

aided design and simulations (CAD, CAE) for powertrain, chassis, and exteriors to embedded systems, telematics and developing various IT applications and tools. The satellite office in Pune specializes in interior component designs and IT engineering. The establishment of MBRDI is in line with the Daimler group's ambition to attract the world's best engineering talent and form a global footprint for its R&D and IT competencies. MBRDI also aims to partner closely with suppliers in India for its activities in product development and IT services. It is now one of the largest global development centres outside Germany, employing more than 6500 skilled engineers; and has established itself as a valuable partner to all business units and brands of Daimler worldwide.

About SaveLIFE Foundation:

SaveLIFE Foundation saves lives on roads in India and beyond by improving road safety and access to emergency medical care (UN SDGs 3.6 and 11.2). We fix roads: through crash investigations and smart engineering design, we make streets and highways safer for everyone. We strengthen emergency trauma services: with support from ambulance operators, police forces, and emergency medical teams, we train first responders in life-saving skills and bridge gaps between road crashes and the delivery of urgent trauma care. We design impactful policies: working in partnership with government agencies, industry, and grassroots organisations, we create and advocate for regulations that eliminate unsafe driving behaviours and enforce traffic laws to protect all road users. The results: we have reduced road crash deaths on India's dangerous Mumbai-Pune Expressway by 52%. We secured India's first Good Samaritan Law to protect bystanders when helping road crash victims. Our technology allows ambulances to reach Delhi's residents as fast as possible during the COVID-19 crisis. Our ambition is to save 1 million lives by 2027.



Overall Safety

30% of children reported witnessing a crash during their commute to school.

54% of the respondents who conveyed their concerns to the school authorities reported that no action was taken by school authorities. Further, **52%** of the parents and **60%** of the children, reported that their school has not conducted any workshop/class to educate the students on road safety and safe driving.



Commute Via School Transport

Overall, **47%** of the respondents using school transport claimed that the vehicle that they / their ward commute/s in, is not equipped with seatbelts.

Low Awareness regarding the safety guidelines:

52% of the respondents stated that either the vehicles were not fitted or they were not aware of the presence of speed governor in the vehicle. Further, **41%** of the respondent parents reported either that the school did not have a transport manager, or they were unaware of the presence of one.



Commute Via Privately Arranged Transport

72% of respondents overall using private vehicles reported that the vehicles were not equipped with a seatbelt.

About **23%** of the parents and **26%** of the children using privately arranged vehicles claimed that the child complained about rash driving by the driver.



Safety Around School Zones

47% of the respondents who used a cycle, mentioned that no cycling paths were present throughout their commute. Further, **30%** of the respondents reported the absence of a footpath at the school zone.

49% of the respondents (parents) whose child walked to school claimed that their child witnessed dangerous traffic on their way to school.



Commute Via Self/Family Driven Transport

Safety Devices: **34%** of the respondents admitted that they never use headgear/helmet. Further, **20%** of the respondents that use private cars admitted that all passengers (including children) don't wear seat belts.

85% of the parents of children who walked to school reported that their child does not use a retro reflective jacket or any other such measure.



SURVEY DETAILS

Sample Coverage
11,845 respondents

Geographic Coverage
14 cities across India

Respondent Type

Parents, Children, Enforcement Officials, School Authorities, Road Safety Experts, School Vehicle and Carpool Drivers