

Identifying perception of people on road accidents and managing as a societal hazard: a case study in Anuradhapura district of Sri Lanka**Gunawardhana LMAP***Department of Environmental Management, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,
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Road accident is one of the major man-made hazards in Sri Lanka. Population of vehicles and number of road accidents are increasing day by day. At present 6-7 people die on the road every day and according to statistics on road accidents in Sri Lanka compiled by the Ministry of Transport, 2440 in 2014, 2816 in 2015, 3003 in 2016 and 3101 in 2017 died on the road. These statistics show that the trend of death due to road accidents are increasing. Therefore, a large number of lives of people and property damage are lost to the nation every year. Identifying causes and impacts of road accidents, what is the perception of people on road accidents, and finding what are the possible strategies to minimize the risk of road accidents were major objectives. 60 samples were used for this study. Researcher used both primary and secondary data for this study. Key person interviews, questionnaire, were major primary data collecting methods. Using books, articles, data from department of censuses and department of police were secondary data source. Qualitative and quantitative analysis were used for analyzing data. Results highlighted that 100% of people accepted that road accidents have been increased and the major reason for road accidents is the different types of mistakes done by drivers such as negligence of the driver, high speed, lack of experience and knowledge, using mobiles while driving, using alcohol etc. Mistakes done by pedestrians, poor maintenance of vehicle and some errors of roads are also responsible for increasing road accidents. Motorcycle is the most risky vehicle of Sri Lanka and Three-wheeler is the second. Introducing proper mechanism with good training to give license for the drivers, implementing law strictly, and giving awareness on road safety during the school time, using new technology, etc. can be used to minimize the risk of road accidents in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Road accident, risk, societal hazard