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# Child safety should be focus of National transport policy: KSCPCR

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**B**ENGALURU: With studies showing that nearly 10-15% of accident victims are children, the Karnataka State Commission for protection of child rights has written to the empowered group of ministers looking at passing the road safety bill. The Chairperson of KSCPCR, Krupa Alva, has asked not only for the bill to be passed without any more delay and to ensure that specific rules for child safety be brought into the policy, with focus on stringent implementation.

"A large number of children are both direct and indirect victims of accidents- be it when they are injured or when they are affected because their parents met with accidents. Not only are lives of children being lost, but losing lives of people who are in the productive stages (15-45) is also resulting in a loss to our GDP," she said.

The National Road safety bill was introduced last year, but has been revised numerous times. An empowered committee of ministers with Rajasthan's transport minister Yoonus Khan as its chairman and Ramalinga Reddy (Karnataka's transport minister) as one of the members, was set up to look at various concerns with regard to the bill. The second meeting of the committee is scheduled to be held in Karnataka later this week.

According to statistics by the National Crime Records Bureau (2014) Karnataka ranks fourth in road deaths after Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Bengaluru registers the 5th highest number of road deaths among cities, after Delhi, Chennai, Jaipur and Bhopal.

"The bill talks about child restraints in vehicles, but the penalty for violation needs to be higher and these rules have to be enforced stringently," said Dr Pragathi Hebbar of Institute of Public Health.

Considering that Karnataka has already implemented a number of initiatives that proactively looks at reducing deaths and injuries due to accidents, it should also take the lead in urging for a strong road safety bill, believes Ashok Kumar Shetty, general secretary of the Karnataka chapter of the Red Cross. "The mandate for pillion riders to wear helmets, the Harish scheme, bike ambulances and schemes for medical relief to road crash victims are positive steps. Having set these positive examples, it would be apt for Karnataka government to urge for and support a comprehensive legislation on road safety at the national level," he said.