

## ABSTRACT

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**Stream 1: Research**

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**Title:** A critical review of newspaper articles reporting crashes of long-distance public buses in Nepal

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### **Background**

Public transport is the primary mode of transportation in Nepal. It has a high road traffic fatality rate with bus crashes on long-distance routes accounting for 13% of fatalities and 31% of serious injuries. Only limited information is available in police records.

### **Objective**

To examine the factors associated with road traffic crashes, injuries and deaths in long-distance bus crashes in Nepal, as reported in national newspapers.

### **Methods**

The three national media sources with public access to their archives were selected. Search terms were derived from an analysis of media reporting of crashes. A data extraction spreadsheet was developed, piloted with 15 cases, and refined. All long-distance public vehicle crashes reported in the three newspapers between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, were recorded. Data were analyzed to produce descriptive statistics and textual data provided information on the context of the crash.

### **Results**

We found 210 crash reports meeting the inclusion criteria, resulting in 425 deaths and 1928 injuries. The province with the largest number of recorded crashes was Bagmati (32%), followed by Gandaki (20%), Koshi (14%), Madhesh (10%), Lumbini (9%), Karnali (8%) and Sudurpaschim (7%). In 67.6% of the cases, it was a single vehicle crash which implies either driver error or vehicle failure. 31% of the reports did not specify the cause of the crash. Where the cause was cited, 22% were collisions with another vehicle, in 15% of cases the driver was said to have lost control of the vehicle, 8% were due to poor weather condition, 4% were due to collision with physical barrier and 2% were due to brake failure. 11% mentioned the bus falling off the road, but this was more likely the reason that the crash resulted in casualties than the cause. 7% of bus crashes reported involved a pedestrian, but again it was unclear if they contributed to the crash or were a casualty.

**Conclusion**

Media reports on bus crashes offer valuable supplementary data for comprehending the epidemiology of long-distance bus crashes, especially in situations where routine data sources are limited. The newspaper reports highlight factors associated with bus crashes that warrant further research.