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A FIVE YEAR REVIEW OF RAILWAY RELATED DEATHS IN MANDYA TOWN OF KARNATAKA: A RETROSPECTIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT: This study was carried out on 95 railway related deaths in order to determine the profile of deceased victims and injuries there on. Of the 95 cases, 90 (94.73%) were males & 5 cases (5.26%) were females. Majority were in the age group of 21-30 yrs. Most victims died as a result of suicide (73.68%) & (26.31%) accident i.e. 70 cases of suicide & 25 cases of accident. Decapitation & hemi section of the body at thoraco- abdominal level were more common in suicidal deaths. Head injury accounted more in accident deaths.

KEYWORDS: Railway, Suicide, Injuries, Accident.

INTRODUCTION: In India, railway related deaths are quite common because of vast railway networks. A Determined suicide victim will on purpose lie across railway track or place head for the purpose of self destruction.⁽¹⁾

In the absence of case history it is difficult to distinguish between, accident/Suicidal death or criminal violence.⁽²⁾ Railway deaths are usually because of a person trying to cross the track/collision between trains, automobile accident in unmanned crossings, passengers who hang out of doors & are hit by trees/poles or during outbreak of fire.⁽³⁾ Railway wheel mark. Dirt & grease contamination, pattern of injuries over the body deserve careful observation to rule out criminal violence.⁽⁴⁾ Present study is an attempt to establish incidence, pattern & manner in cases of railway related deaths.

MATERIALS & METHODS: All the victims who succumb to railway deaths were subjected to postmortem examination at the mortuary MIMS Mandya during 5yrs period from Jan 2006 to Jan 2011. 95 cases out of 1864 autopsies were related to railway deaths. All deaths in railway premises due to natural causes without any external injuries over the body & advanced putrefied cases were excluded.

Inclusion Criteria: All deaths due to railway injuries autopsied at MIMS Mandya between 2006-2011 were included.

Exclusion Criteria: Advanced putrefied beside were excluded (2). All deaths in railway premises due to natural cases without any external injuries over body were excluded.

RESULTS: During the five year period amongst the 1864, post mortem cases which came to MIMS mortuary included 95 victims of railway related deaths.

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The Majority of victims were males 90(94.73%) and 05 females (5.26%) most of them were in age group of 21-30 yrs. Victims ages ranged from 15yrs to 76 yrs. Most of deaths were suicidal in nature 70 cases (73.68%) & 25 cases (26.31%) accidental in nature. 40 of 70 cases of suicide (57.14%) showed decapitation & 30 cases showed hemi section of body at thoraco - abdominal level (42.85%). In 25 cases of accidents (26.31%) which involved multiple injuries splitting the body into several pieces with oil and grease stains. Amongst 95 victims 66 were married (69.4%) & 29 (30.2%) victims unmarried. Total number of Hindu victims was 85 (89.47%) & Muslims 10 cases (10.52%).

DISCUSSION: Deaths have occurred in association with railway since the inception of railway⁽⁵⁾ in the present study males are commonest victims of railway deaths which concurs with studies conducted by other authors.^(2,4,5,6,7,8) Probable reason being railways are cheap, Quick & comfortable mode of transport for travelling.

IN the present study, most commonly associated age group was between 21-30 yrs & significantly less in extreme ages. In this competitive era struggle for settlement failures in life, marital & financial problems compelled victims to take extreme decision for ending the life. This corresponds with other studies.^(2,6,9)

Age in yrs	Males	Females
Below 20	12	01
20-30 y	23	03
30-40	15	01
40-50	14	00
50-60	12	00
60-70	08	00
> 70	06	00

Table 1

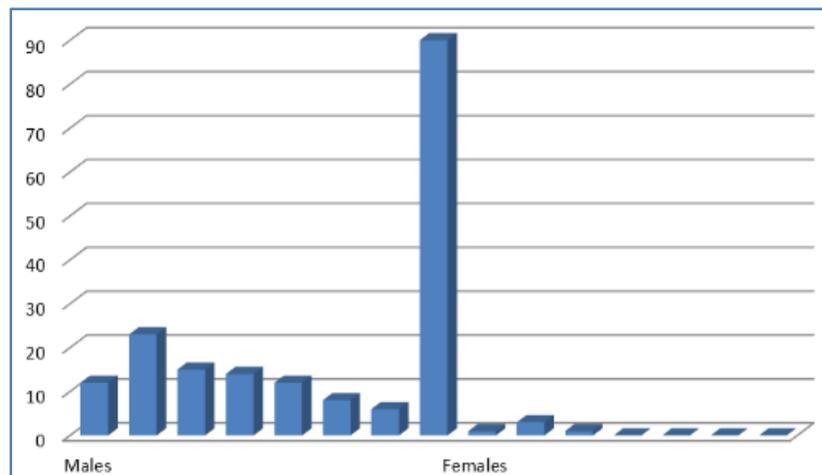


Fig. 1

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The conclusions regarding the manner of death are based upon history given by police, crime scene investigation & postmortem findings. Suicides outnumbered accidents. (Table 3). This study tallies with studies conducted in Africa.⁽²⁾

Suicide deaths due to train run over are common in males as they prefer hard methods of committing suicide than females & extensive injuries are due to primary impact. When the person lies down on the railway tracks there may be decapitation, amputation of limbs & dismembering of the body.⁽¹¹⁾

Amongst 70 cases of suicide, 40 cases showed decapitation & 30 cases showed hemi section of body. In most of victims of railway accidents injuries over the head were fatal in nature which correlates with findings of other authors.^(2,8,10) In many cases, fatal injuries mutilated the body & involved more than one body region which is in accordance with Cina et al.⁽⁶⁾

In our study most of the victims who succumbed to death due to railway injuries belonged to Hindus followed by Muslims owing to density of Hindu population which is more than the Muslims.

Majority of railway deaths were seen in married male individuals who were bread earners of family, emphasizing the role of post marital stress, family conflicts, depression in life owing to stress of life & failures.

Religion	Males	Females
Hindu	80	05
Muslim	10	00
Others	00	00
Total	90	05

Table 2

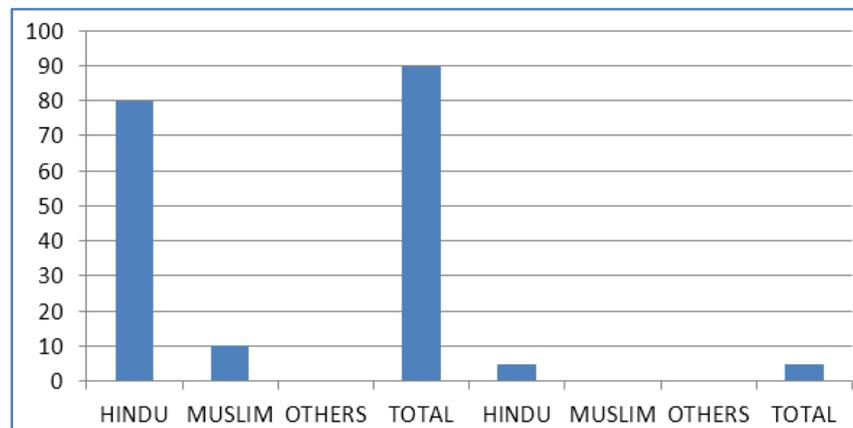


Fig. 2

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	Suicide deaths	Accidental deaths
Married Males	40	20
Married Females	03	03
Unmarried Males	25	01
Unmarried Females	02	01
	70	25

Table 3

CONCLUSION: It can be concluded from the present study that most of the railway related deaths have occurred in the bread earning age group males and the suicide is the common mode in the railway related deaths. As the risk of death is concentrated on males in the bread earning age group, preventive measures such as integrated surveillance system & safety engineering techniques should be prioritized towards this particular group by the railway authorities, social activists and non-governmental organizations.

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