

# Exploring Road Safety Challenges Faced by Learners at Makapanstad Primary Schools

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**Abstract:** South Africa's road infrastructure is crucial to its economy, facilitating the movement of goods and people both domestically and internationally. The extensive system of national highways and secondary routes is essential for various users, including commuters and learners. This study explores road safety challenges faced by learners travelling to Makapanstad primary schools. The study further posits that learners encounter significant obstacles related to safety regulations, despite government's efforts to enhance enforcement and raise public awareness to reduce traffic accidents. The disturbing road accident mortality rate of 25 per 100,000 individuals necessitates that urgent attention should be accorded to road safety measures. The study employed qualitative research methods, with purposively sampled participant categories that included teachers and learners in the Moretele district through semi-structured interviews and observations. The ATLAS.ti software was utilised for recording, transcribing, and analysing data. The findings underscore myriad challenges regarding traffic law enforcement and compliance, and behavioural issues among road users. Additionally, difficulties were noted with scholar patrol operations and local bylaw enforcement. The transportation of learners and teachers remains a pressing concern for the South African government, as revealed by the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS, 2013). In conclusion, law enforcement agencies must address traffic regulations, compliance, vehicle and driver assessments, infrastructure issues, and road user education.

**Keywords:** Road safety, learners, teachers, challenges

## Introduction And Background

The North-West Department of Education envisions a commitment to nurturing and assisting communities to achieve excellence in basic education, thereby enhancing learner outcomes within the Moretele Local Municipality (North-West Department of Education, 2025). This vision is closely aligned with Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) – hereafter, “the Constitution” - which safeguards and promotes the rights of every learner to receive quality, equitable, culturally relevant, and comprehensive basic education (South Africa, 1996). The Moretele Local Municipality predominantly comprises the following villages and townships: Makapanstad, Tladistad, Mathibestad, Mogogelo, Motla, Swartdam, Dikebu, Makgabetlwane, Mmakaunyana, Maubane, Kekana villages, and Temba and Rentowns townships. The village of Makapanstad is situated within the Moretele Local Municipality, and constitutes part of the Bojanala District in South Africa's North-West Province (NWP). This village is governed by the Makapan royal family of the Bakgatla Ba Moseitlha tribal authority, whose totemic animal is the ‘kgabo’ (monkey). Currently, the traditional head of Makapanstad is Kgosi Nchaupe III (the third) Makapane, preceded by Kgosi Motshegwa Hendrick Makapane who passed away on 26 December 2014.

During the 2022–2023 financial year, a strategic risk assessment was conducted to determine and guide the Moretele Local Municipality's management regarding the risk factors that could potentially prevent achievement of its strategic objectives and service delivery mandate (Moretele Municipality, 2023). According to the Moretele Local Municipality Report (2023), there is a lack of Road Master Plans for guiding the refurbishment and construction of roads within the municipality for the purpose of ensuring safety of the community. The latter state of affairs has painted a negative picture in Makapanstad, as road safety measures remain a major concern for learners and constitute one of the leading causes of death among learners on their way to school. Consequently, the Legal Resources Centre (LRC) submitted a

query to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) Investigative Inquiry in 2025, highlighting numerous issues with the policies and administration of the North-West Department of Community Safety and Transport Management (COSATMA) and the North-West Department of Education (NWDOE) (Mosebetsi, 2025). These failures have resulted in thousands of learners being deprived of safe and reliable transportation to, and from school.

Notwithstanding the transport-related deficiencies, the villages in the Moretele Local Municipality are covered by an extensive road network that includes national and secondary roads. Such public transport infrastructure is essential for individual road users, drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and learners using public transport to, and from school. There is a notable rise in the volume of vehicles on public roads (Writer, 2023). Consequently, all road users must engage in safe and responsible behaviours to mitigate the risk of accidents, while also safeguarding both their well-being and that of others. Modipa (2022) further emphasises that human factors significantly contribute to road traffic fatalities, as numerous users, particularly drivers, often disregard traffic regulations.

Road traffic authorities have been assigned the responsibility of ensuring road safety. However, there exists a perception that the above responsibility is undermined by corrupt practices within law enforcement agencies. Regrettably, such practices adversely affect developmental road safety initiatives. This concern is corroborated by the World Health Organisation's 2023 report, noted that over 90% of road traffic fatalities occur in low- and middle-income nations, with the highest rates occurring in the African region (World Health Organisation, 2023). Affluent countries are affected as well, with individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds being disproportionately involved in road traffic accidents (Modiba, 2022). This reality endangers the lives of individuals and learners who rely on the road network, including national highways and secondary roads, for activities such as walking, public transport access, and cycling. It is essential for municipalities to prioritise the safe and efficient movement of both teachers and learners, as this is fundamental to the social prosperity of a nation, with road infrastructure playing a crucial role in facilitating this objective (Patience & Nel, 2021).

### **Aim of the Article**

This study explores the challenges faced by learners who travel to Makapanstad primary schools. The learner's transport system functions within a road network where drivers are required to adhere to traffic safety regulations. Such adherence resonates with the South African government's initiatives aimed at strengthening law enforcement, implementing more stringent road safety policies, and initiating public awareness campaigns to reduce the high incidence of traffic accidents (Department of Transport, 2015b).

### **Contextualising Learner Transport in North-West Province**

Similar to other provinces, scholar transport and the safety of learners are complex issues closely linked to the country's history and socio-economic conditions, significantly impacting access to education. In 2015, the government introduced and adopted the National Transport Policy (NTP) to manage scholar transportation nationwide, thereby regulating the sector (Department of Transport, 2015a). The goal of the NTP is to provide safe and reliable transportation for learners' access to quality education, as outlined in Section 29 of the Constitution. In that regard, the NTP serves as a collaborative effort between the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Transport (DoT), focusing on ensuring road safety for learners commuting to school in pursuit of quality education. The NTP's implementation involves partnerships with provinces, municipalities, traditional councils, and school governing bodies (SGBs).

The NTP establishes standardised norms and facilitates stakeholder cooperation, alongside a framework for monitoring and evaluating learner transport services. Key principles entailed in the NTP include operational safety and efficiency, accessibility, equity, sustainability, and multi-modal integration (Department of Transport, 2015a). The NTP's primary aim is to subsidise learners from Grade R to Grade 12 residing in areas lacking public transport, ensuring they no longer walk long distances to school.

The North-West province established a provincial scholar transport strategy that aligns with the National Transport Policy of 2015, which is administered and managed by the province's Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport. The department customised its policy in accordance with its unique situation, resulting in learner transport rules that differ from those in other provinces (Department of Transport, 2015b). However, the National Traffic Police, Provincial Traffic Police, and Municipal Police must collaborate and prioritise the safety of learners throughout their commutes to school in order to enhance visibility on roadways and at crossing points. Consistent application and enforcement of the law could significantly decrease accidents involving learners, who are particularly susceptible to road regulations.

### Legislative Measures and Policies for Enforcing Learners' Road Safety

The Department of Basic Education compiled a strategic framework that specifically focuses on school safety as an apex priority in the department in order to ensure the safety of all learners and relevant stakeholders in South African schools (North-West Department of Education, 2025). This strategic framework draws from the SA government's adopted policies and legislation aimed at ensuring the protection and safety of schoolchildren. The legislative and policy frameworks are depicted in Table 1 below, including their focus on learners' safety.

**Table 1: South African legislation and policies focusing on learner safety and transportation**

Legislations & Policies	Focus on Learners Safety
<b>Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to Section 29(1)(a), "all learners are entitled to basic education."</li> <li>• Section 85 delegates the responsibility to the Department of Transport to formulate and implement transport policies (South Africa, 1996a).</li> </ul>
<b>White Paper on National Transport Policy, 1996 and 2022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 72 provides a regulatory framework governing the operations associated with learner transport (South Africa, 1996b).</li> </ul>
<b>National Land Transport Act, No. 5 of 2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The objective of the National Land Transport Act, No. 5 of 2009 and its accompanying regulations is to "set forth national principles, requirements, guidelines, frameworks, and standards that must be uniformly applied across the provinces, as well as addressing other issues as outlined in Section 146(2) of the Constitution (South Africa, 2015).</li> <li>• Section 72 affirms the establishment of a regulatory framework for learner transport operations (South Africa, 2009).</li> </ul>
<b>National Road Traffic Act, No. 93 of 1996</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Act addresses matters related to road traffic, which are to be uniformly applied throughout the Republic, including issues concerning the registration and licensing of motor vehicles, the assessment of driver fitness, and vehicle fitness standards (South Africa, 1996c).</li> </ul>
<b>South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 3 of this Act mandates a compulsory general education phase for children aged 7 years to 15 years, which corresponds with grades 1 to 9 (South Africa, 1996d).</li> </ul>
<b>National Education Policy Act, No. 27 of 1996</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Act grants the Minister of Basic Education the authority to establish national norms and standards for educational planning, provision, governance, monitoring, and evaluation (South Africa, 1996e).</li> </ul>
<b>Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, No. 13 of 2005</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Act provides for Principles of Cooperative Governance (South Africa, 2005).</li> </ul>
<b>Learner Transport Policy of 2015</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy ensures and protects the rights of learners to access education as entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa through a reliable and safe scholar transport system (South Africa, 2015).</li> </ul>
<b>Road Traffic Management Corporation Amendment Act, No. 24 of 2000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RTMC is mandated to develop and enforce a standardised learner driver curriculum that encompasses comprehensive road safety education, covering rules of the road, defensive driving techniques, hazard perception, and responsible driving behaviours (South Africa, 2000).</li> </ul>
<b>Road Accident Fund Amendment Act, No. 15 of 2001</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Act allows the Road Accident Fund (RAF) to contribute financially to road safety projects and programmes approved by the Minister, which could include initiatives specifically focused</li> </ul>

	on learner and teacher road safety measures, such as driver education programmes for learner drivers and awareness campaigns targeted at teachers to promote responsible road behaviour when transporting learners (South Africa, 2001).
<b>The Road Accident Fund Commission Act, No. 71 of 1998</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Act also proposes the establishment of a commission to investigate and recommend improvements to the system of compensation for road accident victims, which indirectly supports learner road safety measures by promoting research and policy changes aimed at minimising accidents and their disastrous consequences. This could include initiatives such as targeted education programmes for learners and teachers on road safety rules and responsible driving behaviours (South Africa, 1998).</li> </ul>
<b>Administrative Adjudication of Road Traffic Offences Act, No. 72 of 2002</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Act focuses on implementing a demerit points system to deter road traffic violations, which directly impacts on individual road safety measures by encouraging responsible driving behaviour through potential licence suspension for accumulating points from traffic offences, thereby promoting awareness and adherence to road rules among both learner drivers and their instructors.</li> </ul>

In North-West Province, the provision of scholar transport is governed by national and provincial legislation and policies, notably the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 and the National Transport Policy. The Department of Community Safety and Transport Management is responsible for supervising scholar transport services, thereby facilitating learners' safety and access education facilities (South Africa, 2015). The recent initiatives undertaken by the North-West Legislature reflect a dedicated effort to address critical concerns, such as the timely remuneration of service providers and enhancement of safety and dependability in scholar transport systems.

### **Transportation Methods Utilised By Learners for Commuting to Schools**

Mngaza, Dhlamini, and van Zyl (2001) accentuate the essence of adopting a comprehensive approach to learner transportation in North-West Province. This approach must consider both the requirements of the learners and the transportation service itself. In this regard, the key factors to address include, but are not limited to affordability, subsidies, accessibility, safety and security, vehicle type, trip duration, and distance. Additionally, it is crucial to examine the significance and function of learner transport within the broader transportation landscape, which encompasses aspects such as the planning processes, the interplay of various transportation modes, the development of infrastructure and transport services, as well as the overall transport funding model.

The Legal Resources Centre (2025) recently made submissions to the South African Human Rights Commission's Investigative Inquiry regarding scholar transport challenges in North-West Province. Deenik (2025) highlighted a range of policy and administrative failures by the North-West Department of Community Safety and Transport Management and the North-West Department of Education (NWDOE). These failures have left thousands of learners without access to safe and reliable transport to, and from school. Currently, data from surveys conducted by Stats SA in 2020 and Equal Education in 2022 indicate that the learner transport crisis is more prevalent in South Africa (Kunene, Cyster & Tsesane, 2022). However, the challenges differ from province to province across the country due to geographical location and transportation methods used by the learners. Our submissions highlighted a range of policy and administrative failures by the North-West Department of Community Safety and Transport Management and the North-West Department of Education, which have left thousands of learners without access to safe, reliable transport to, and from school.

The LRC (2025) identified major shortcomings in the COSATMA's North-West Provincial Learner Transport Policy. The policy literally replicates the National Learner Transport Policy, but fails to respond to the specific needs of learners in the province. Furthermore, the Provincial Policy guidelines contradict several of the policy's provisions and significantly narrow the definition of qualifying beneficiaries. These exclusions affect learners in urban and peri-urban areas, as well as learners with disabilities, reflecting a clear failure to uphold the constitutional rights of all children to basic education (Mosebetsi, 2025).

### The provincial initiative to enhance road safety measures for learners

The North-West province augments to the scrutiny of scholar transport services and their capacity to guarantee safety and accountability. This programme includes formulation of a provincial transport strategy, conducting frequent inspections, and addressing payment delays for transport providers. Additionally, the programme seeks to address problems associated with inadequate driver screening, counterfeit roadworthy certifications, and the need for enhanced monitoring and enforcement (Writer, 2025).

Presently, the province employs the National Transport Policy of 2015 to assess all school transport drivers, which assures the safety of learners. The regulation mandates that all drivers transporting trainees must have three security clearances, which include:

- A Police Clearance Certificate issued by the South African Police Service;
- Clearance from the Sexual Offenders Register; and
- Verification against the Child Protection Register.

These security clearances are necessary for guaranteeing pupil safety in school transport. Hence, the need for a comprehensive strategy for driver assessment. Such a strategy should include the verification of driving credentials (e.g., licences and public driving permits (PDPs)), vehicle condition (roadworthiness, age), and compliance with safety rules. The essential security clearance elements also encompass consistent evaluations, stakeholder involvement, and robust law enforcement.

### The different types of vehicles transporting learners in North-West Province

There are various types of services through which learner transport can be provided. However, it may take some time to fully roll out dedicated learner transport services. Table 2 below illustrates the mainstream public transport modes used in Makapanstad to transport learners. Where possible, these include Integrated Public Transport Networks (IPTNs), conventional municipal bus services, and midi/minibus-type services (South Africa, 1996b). The functionality of such a public transport mode involves concerted coordination of efforts across different government departments and ensuring proper planning, safety, and funding for learner transport.

**Table 2: The Integrated Public Transport Networks (IPTNs) for learners in the North-West province**

Mode of Transport	Descriptions
<b>Bus</b>	A motor vehicle, compliant with the Road Traffic Act, 93 of 1996, designed to transport over 35 passengers, excluding the driver.
<b>School bus</b>	A minibus or bus owned by, or contracted to a school, primarily utilised for transporting learners and affiliated individuals, in line with a valid operating licence.
<b>Midibus</b>	A vehicle compliant with the National Road Traffic Act, No. 93 of 1996, designed to carry between 19 and 35 seated passengers, excluding the driver.
<b>Minibus</b>	A vehicle designed to accommodate 9 to 18 seated passengers, compliant with the National Road Traffic Act, No. 93 of 1996 and the specifications of the Taxi Recapitalisation Programme, as outlined by the Minister of Transport.
<b>Light Delivery Vehicles (LDVs)</b>	These include vehicles such as donkey carts that adhere to the National Road Traffic Act regulations and are equipped for passenger safety.
<b>Bicycles</b>	This category includes two-wheeled cycles, particularly those distributed through the ‘Shova ka Lula Bicycle Project’.

<b>Animal-Drawn Vehicles</b>	These include vehicles such as donkey carts that adhere to the National Road Traffic Act regulations and are equipped for passenger safety.
<b>Pedestrian paths</b>	The policy must address the implications of walking to school, including the provision of pedestrian paths, the 'walking school bus' concept, and safety for learners commuting on foot.

The IPTNs must address the implications of walking to school, including the provision of pedestrian paths, the 'walking school bus' concept, and safety for learners commuting on foot. The IPTN's principles and strategic objectives constitute the National Scholar Transport Policy's core framework.

### **The impact of education national budget cuts on learner transport**

In 1994, South Africa reformed its education system by investing billions of Rands to improve access to quality education, while also addressing historical inequities (North-West Department of Education, 2025:5). However, ongoing challenges have prompted decision-makers to view additional educational investments as ineffective, which resulted in the National Treasury's implementation of budget cuts and austerity measures that inadvertently jeopardise learner safety.

Hlati (2024) and Sutherland (2024:5) mention that budget cuts in education also perpetuate poverty and unemployment for disadvantaged learners. In total, 886,767 learners were transport deficient, yet budget limitations allowed for support to only 673,117, which translates into addressing only 76% of the demand. Additionally, among 48,076 learners with special educational needs, only 44,026 were provided with transport, leaving 8% without transport (Sutherland, 2024:5; Gwarube, 2025:5).

The North-West province's copious challenges in learner road safety include inconsistent inter-provincial transportation models and lack of educational road safety programmes (North-West Department of Education, 2025). Financial constraints in the department limit scholar transport service improvements, leaving some eligible learners without transport access due to budget shortfalls (Gwarube, 2025). Therefore, there is a need for the National Department of Basic Education to work collaboratively with National Treasury to address these funding challenges and improve access to quality scholar transport for learners in the country.

Additionally, the administration of scholar transport responsibilities devolves between the DoT and provincial education departments. Despite these discrepancies, the Minister emphasised a shared commitment to learners' safety among the departments (Gwarube, 2025). The proposed solution involves fostering enhanced collaboration between the DBE and DoT to enhance safety protocols.

Provincial legislatures have recognised the importance of learners' safety due to several tragic incidents often linked to negligent or reckless driver behaviour. These legislatures emphasised the need to shift from perceiving these occurrences as mere accidents, to advocating for collaboration with local law enforcement and the implementation of educational initiatives on road safety to enhance safe commute practices (Writer, 2025).

### **The protection and safety of schoolchildren on the road**

South African roads mostly experience significant traffic congestions during peak morning and afternoon hours when learners and citizens at large commute between school, work, and other places by means of taxis, buss, and private vehicles. The school zones in particular, pose heightened risks for accidents, predominantly due to speeding, distracted driving, and unsafe pedestrian conduct. In order to enhance the safety of children near schools, it is imperative for parents, drivers, and community members to understand school zone regulations, safe drop-off procedures, and pedestrian safety measures.

Law enforcement agencies, including the South African Police Service (SAPS), National Traffic Police (NTP), Provincial Traffic Police (PTP), and Municipal Police, are responsible for enforcing traffic laws and regulations. These include monitoring of speed limits, ensuring seatbelt use, verifying driver's licenses, and combatting drunk driving. In South Africa, speeding and alcohol consumption are major factors in road accidents. Authorities deploy tools such as speed cameras, breathalysers, and checkpoints to detect and penalise violators (Nick-Admin, 2024). Hence, effective enforcement acts as a deterrent against dangerous driving behaviours. When drivers perceive a heightened risk of detection and punishment, compliance with traffic regulations increases. Such compliance correspondingly

reduces instances of speeding, reckless driving, and driving under the influence, all of which are significant contributors to South African road incidents.

Moreover, traffic police engage in road safety campaigns designed to educate the public on safe driving. Collaborating with government bodies, NGOs, and the private sector initiatives such as the “Arrive Alive” campaign, aim to decrease road fatalities through awareness and education. Such initiatives should focus on issues such as the dangers of speeding, the necessity of seatbelts, and the risks associated with drunk driving; all of which promote a culture of responsible driving.

### **Empirical inputs**

Initially, the ideal population envisaged in this article were all the road safety enforcement agencies in South Africa. However, constraints related to distance, time, finance, and the vast number of participants to be covered, necessitated the researchers’ eventual focus on a specific, smaller target population. As such, the researchers focused only on SAPS Police Officials, National Traffic Police, Provincial Traffic Police, Municipal Police enforcing road safety measures, as well as School Governing Bodies in the Makapanstad primary schools. The SGBs’ involvement is premised on their oversight functions in learners’ safety in schools. The researchers focused particularly on Moretele District because of its economic viability as the research site, as well as the convenience with which the researchers gained access to participants in this district. The law enforcement agencies and SGBs are directly involved in overseeing the safety of learners, and their oversight was crucial in providing information for the research.

The researchers purposively selected five (5) SAPS police officials, five (5) Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department officers, another five (5) Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) Traffic Officers, and three (3) SGB members based in Makapanstad village. This range of officers and SGB members serves the community of the Makapanstad village. The participants consisted of five (5) females and 13 males aged between 25 and 60 years. During the interviews, the researcher ceased further data collection upon achieving saturation. Fusch and Ness (2015:1408) contend that saturation occurs when no further information is acquired from participants.

The total number of SAPS members is 53, Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department (43) and Road Traffic Management Corporation traffic officers (35) and 44 SGB members spread within rural and urban areas in Moretele District. The names of participants in the Makapanstad Police Station, Tshwane Metropolitan Police Department, and Makapanstad primary schools were compiled in alphabetical order and written on separate pieces of paper, after which these pieces were folded and placed in a hat. The contents were then shaken and the names randomly taken out one after the other until 18 participants were drawn as stated in the above paragraph. The following thirteen questions were posed to the participants:

1. What are the road safety concerns impacting on learners in the Moretele district, especially in proximity to educational facilities?
2. What strategies do law enforcement utilise to tackle the issues related to learner road safety in the area?
3. Are these strategies effective, and if not, how can they be improved?
4. What are the functions of various law enforcement agencies regarding traffic regulations for learners travelling to schools?
5. What is the present condition of school safety patrols in Soshanguve, and what help do they receive?
6. Which are the unique obstacles or constraints that school safety patrols encounter, and how can they be mitigated?
7. What is the training and equipment provided to scholar patrollers for the execution of their responsibilities?
8. How can the community bolster and enhance the function of scholar patrols?
9. Which are the protocols that guarantee the safety of scholar patrollers?
10. What is the role of law enforcement agencies in educating learners about safe road practices?
11. Which specific programmes or initiatives are in place to target road safety education for learners?
12. How is the effectiveness of these educational programmes assessed?
13. What strategies can parents and the community employ to strengthen the road safety message?

Data analysis and interpretation was undertaken in accordance with the six procedures outlined by Creswell (2014:185–190). Creswell (2014:9) delineates a linear, hierarchical methodology that progresses from the foundational level to the apex, characterised by practical interactivity, with interconnected phases that may not always be traversed in the prescribed sequence. Data analysis and interpretation was conducted through the ATLAS.ti software application, which also enabled realisation of the following six-step process as emphasised by Creswell (2014:189):

**Step 1:** The interviews were documented and transcribed;

**Step 2:** The researcher reviewed the material submitted by each participant for the purpose of comprehending their perspectives and discerning consistencies and discrepancies in their response statements;

**Step 3:** Information was encoded by categorising the segmented utterances into classifications and designating themes using terminology derived from participants' responses;

**Step 4:** The coding procedure was used to provide a description of the participants' perspectives, leading to the identification and articulation of a reduced number of themes in the data;

**Step 5:** The selected themes were crafted into a narrative in order to derive conclusions from the participants' perspectives; and

**Step 6:** In the concluding phase, the researcher's background as a former police officer was crucial). The interview-based data was analysed, enhancing comprehension of the participants' viewpoints. Consequently, the themes that emerged from the research were classified on the basis of the participants' perspectives and essential theoretical ideas to in order to elucidate the insights gained from the interview questions.

Ethical Clearance was obtained from the College of Law at Unisa prior to the start of the study as part of the Road Safety Engagement Scholarship (Certificate No: CLAW2023/Ref #:0063).

### **Findings**

The results indicate that law enforcement authorities and government departments do not adequately enforce regulations pertaining to learner safety, particularly on traffic law compliance, vehicle and driver fitness-for-purpose, infrastructural concerns, and road user education. The learners ultimately become victims of:

- Unroadworthy school transportation;
- Unlicensed drivers;
- Drivers without Professional Driving Permits;
- Illegal transportation of people in uncertified and unroadworthy vehicles;
- Overloading of learners;
- Poor road conditions in rural regions compromising the safety and efficiency of travelling to schools and
- Unregulated governmental and private transportation failing to adhere to safety norms.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

There is an urgent need for prompt action to address issues related to road safety measures. Training on road safety legislation, pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, and responsible driving behaviours is specifically designed for learners and novice drivers. Team and Team (2025) propound that collaboration is crucial for developing and executing successful solutions that emphasise sustainability and social responsibility. Such initiatives may cultivate a more auspicious future for all parties concerned. This initiative requires collaborative efforts from governments, businesses, and communities. It is essential to involve the wider community, especially parents and guardians in enhancement of understanding road safety concerns for the purpose of promoting safe habits in the home environment. A notable issue in South Africa is that road accidents do not compensate passengers in cars classified as unroadworthy, which adversely impacts on learner safety and well-being. Moreover, parents often neglect to evaluate the quality of vehicles used for transporting their children to school and confirmation of the validity of the driver's licence.

This article recommends that schools should be conversant with school transport management by the providers. This duty is fundamentally assigned to the National Department of Transport, which is responsible for authorising certified transport services (Department of Transport, 2015b). Operators sometimes use unroadworthy and unlicensed vehicles to transport learners and teachers to, and from educational establishments. The following action plan must be prioritised to enhance road safety measures for learners:

- School-based instructional programmes that address activities focusing on imparting knowledge on road safety legislation, pedestrian safety, bicycle safety, and responsible driving practices, particularly tailored for young drivers and learners;
- Driver education programmes for learners in order to enhance awareness on possible risks and foster safe driving habits to prevent learner deaths;

- Public awareness programmes designed to educate the population and enhance comprehension of road safety concerns;
- Regulation of school transport to mandate educational institutions' oversight on the dependability and effectiveness of their transport services, and requiring parents to assess the condition of cars and the credentials of drivers.
- Emphasising collaboration among law enforcement authorities, educational institutions, parents, and the community in order to guarantee improved road safety.

Furthermore, it is essential to enhance knowledge of road safety concerns throughout the wider community, including parents and guardians, which strengthens safe habits at home. The safety of learners is increasingly seen as a crucial component of the right to basic education (North-West Department of Education, 2025:5). Without this protection, many learners would continue to experience difficulties in accessing educational institutions safely and with dignity. Efficient planning, financing, and execution of learners' transportation programmes are essential measures for addressing the safety needs of all learners. Therefore, it is imperative for learners, guardians, and educational communities to investigate the transportation programmes at their schools in order to verify the conformity criteria used for learner identification in tandem with both the National Learner Transport Policy of 2015) and the Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996). The latter guarantees the right to basic education, while the afore-cited policy enjoins provincial authorities to be responsible for their budgeting and planning regarding learner transport.

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