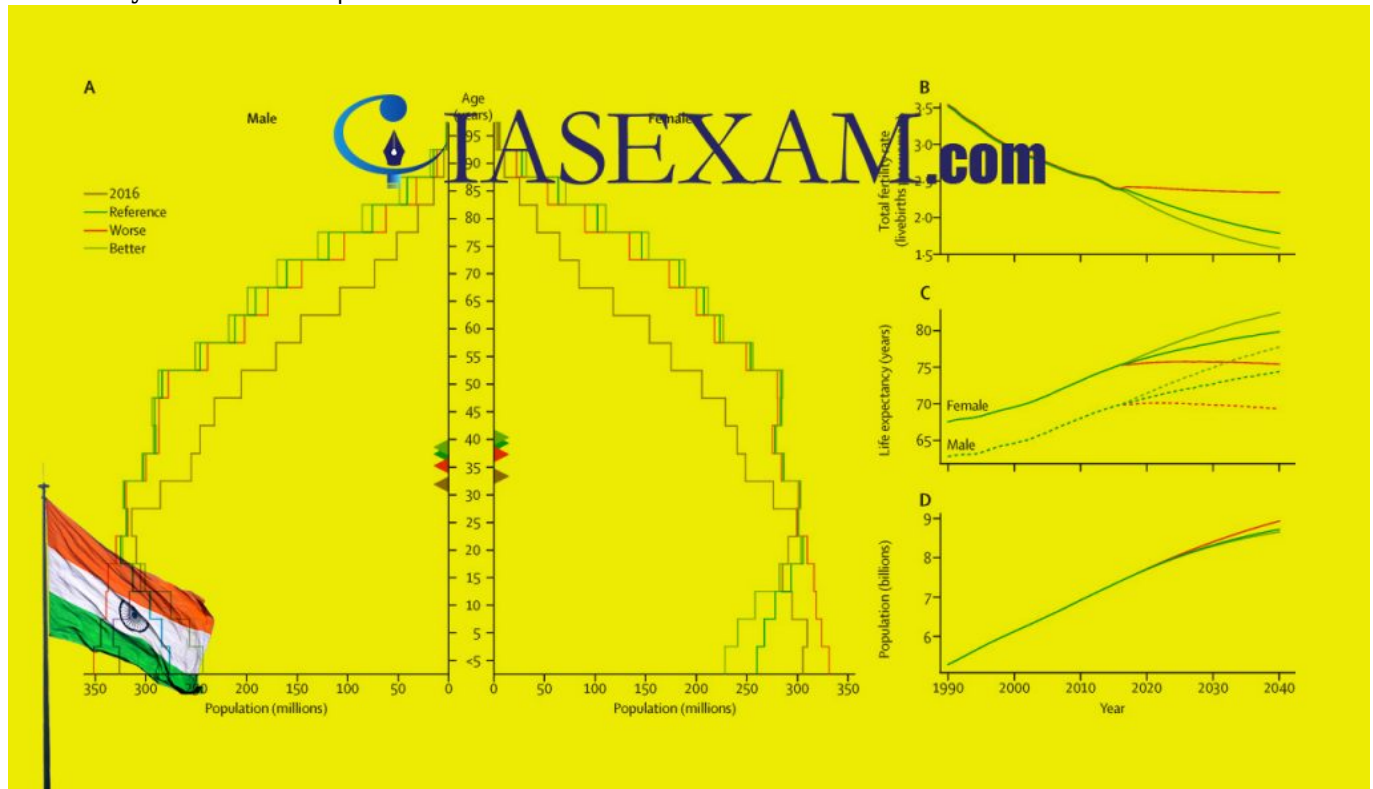


India's Life Expectancy in an upward curve: Lancet study

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India has gained more than a decade of life expectancy since 1990, but there are wide inequalities between states, according to a new study which assessed more than 286 causes of death and 369 diseases and injuries in more than 200 countries and territories across the world.

The study, published in the Lancet journal, noted that life expectancy in India has risen from 59.6 years in 1990 to 70.8 years in 2019, ranging from 77.3 years in Kerala to 66.9 years in Uttar Pradesh.

Key Highlights

- However, the researchers, including Srinivas Goli from the Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar, said the increase in 'healthy life expectancy' in India has not been as dramatic as the growth of life expectancy since "people are living more years with illness and disability.
- According to the international team of scientists, the current global crisis of chronic diseases and failure of public health to stem the rise in highly preventable risk factors such as high blood pressure, tobacco use, and air pollution have left populations

vulnerable to acute health emergencies such as Covid19.

- While many parts of the world have also controlled infectious diseases through immunisation and better medical care, he said some countries still struggle to manage these epidemics.
- In the South Asia region, they said non-communicable diseases (NCDs) now contribute to more than half of the years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death, which was dominated by infectious, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases 30 years ago.
- Citing an example, the researchers said 58 per cent of the total disease burden in India is now due to non-communicable diseases, up from 29 per cent in 1990, while premature deaths due to NCDs have more than doubled from 22 to 50 per cent.
- The study found that the largest contributors to increasing health loss in India over the last 30 years were NCDs like ischaemic heart disease, COPD, diabetes, stroke, and a group of musculoskeletal disorders.
- In 2019, the research noted that the top five risk factors for death in India were air pollution (contributing to an estimated 1.67 million deaths), high blood pressure (1.47 million), tobacco use (1.23 million), poor diet (1.18 million), and high blood sugar (1.12 million).
- The scientists said several of the risk factors and NCDs highlighted by the study, including obesity and diabetes are associated with increased risk of serious illness and death from Covid-19.
- According to the scientists, high blood pressure is the third leading risk factor after air pollution, responsible for 10-20 percent of all health loss in eight states in India, primarily in the south.
- The researchers stressed that there is overdue recognition of the importance of social and economic development to overall health all over the world.

SOURCE: *Hindustan Times*