

# **Diabetes in India**

### Why in news?

Scientific evidence shows that diets heavy with ultra-processed food and beverages or high in sugar, fat, and salt are risky and can lead to diabetes.

### Status of diabetes in India

According to the study conducted by the <u>Madras Diabetes Research Foundation</u> in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Union Health Ministry,

- India is the infamous <u>diabetes capital of the world</u> accounting for one sixth of the world's population with considerable occurrence at younger age (45-64 years).
- It revealed that <u>11.4%</u> of India's population or <u>10.13 crore people</u> are living with diabetes.
- The study showed that 5.3% of the population or an additional 13.6 crore people are prediabetic.
- It also found that 28.6% of the population would be considered to be <u>obese</u> as per the <u>BMI</u> measure.

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#### What is diabetes?

- Diabetes mellitus is a chronic metabolic disorder which is the most common pancreatic endocrine disorder (Non-Communicable Disease).
- **Characteristics** It is caused due to insufficient, deficient or failure of <u>insulin</u> <u>secretion</u>.
  - **Hyperglycaemia** Increase in blood sugar level
  - Glycosuria- Excretion of excess glucose in the urine
  - **Polyuria** Frequent urination
  - Polydipsia- Increased thirst
  - Polyphagia- Increase in appetite
- **Types of Diabetes** There are 3 main types of diabetes.
  - **Type 1 diabetes** is thought to be caused by an autoimmune reaction that stops your body from making insulin.
  - **Type 2 diabetes is** caused when your body does not use insulin well and can't keep blood sugar at normal levels.
  - **Gestational diabetes** is caused by the insulin-blocking hormones that are produced during pregnancy.

Factors	-	Type-2 (Non-insulin dependent diabetes)
Prevalence	10-20%	80-90%
Age of onset	M	Maturity onset (Greater than 30 years)

<b>Body weight</b>	Normal or underweight	Obese
	Insulin deficiency due to destruction of β-cells	Target cells do respond to insulin
Treatment		Can be controlled by diet, exercise and medicine.

# What is the relation between processed foods and diabetes?

- **Ultra processed foods** According to the World Health Organization, consumption of unhealthy ultra-processed foods and beverages such as carbonated drinks, instant foods, Sugar-sweetened beverages, processed meat products, etc. cause diabetes.
  - $\circ$  A 10% increase in the consumption of ultra-processed food a day is associated with a 15% higher risk of type-2 diabetes among adults.
- **Obesity** When food is ultra-processed, its structure is destroyed and cosmetic additives, colours, and flavours are added.
- This makes people eat more, gain weight, and heightens the risk of diabetes and other chronic diseases.
- Complications-Obesity and diabetes are key risk factors for heart disease and deaths.

# How India become a playground for the food industry?

- **Fall in sale in other countries-** It is reported that the sale of sugar-sweetened beverages has fallen in the last 20 years in many high-income countries.
- To compensate for the loss of sales, companies are now focusing on low- and middle-income countries such as India.
- **Marketing-** Billions of rupees are spent on marketing and advertising ultra-processed food and beverages, which leads to increased consumption by vulnerable populations.
- Celebrity endorsements also determine their consumption decisions.
- It targets younger generations and the growing middle class, making it hard for an individual to choose healthy food options.
- **Environment** While the food industry blames people for bad choices, it is not the people but the environment around them that is to blame.
- **Women-** Women bear the silent burden of this illness as gestational diabetes is common among pregnant women where hormonal changes make the blood sugar levels oscillate.
- **Issues with the food industry** They do not want any restrictions on marketing and they offer partnerships as well as arguments of economic development as 'stakeholders'.
- The food industry also participates in programmes such as 'Eat Right', making false promises.
- Lack of regulation- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has allowed a dominating role to the food industry where front-of-package labelling is still not in place.

### What lies ahead?

• Institutionalisation- States like Tamil Nadu and Kerala have tasked Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) and Anganwadi workers with door-to-door screening,

doing glucometer checks, and counselling people.

- **Legal framework-** Regulatory policy on restricting the marketing of ultra-processed foods and providing warning labels on junk food and beverages is the need of the hour.
- **Awareness-** The people must be informed of the risk of consuming such food.

# Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

- **Establishment** It is a statutory body established under the *Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.*
- Ministry Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- Headquarters Delhi
- **Function** To regulate and monitor, manufacture, processing, distribution, sale and import of food while ensuring safe and wholesome food to the consumers.
- To protect and promote public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety.

### **References**

- 1. The Hindu- Defusing the ticking bomb called diabetes
- 2. The Hindu- Silent burden for women

