

## TODAY'S IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS

### UPSC Mains

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## NON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

**Source:** The post is based on the article published in “The Hindu” on 07.04.2025.

**In News:** Prescribe preventive medicine for a healthy India.

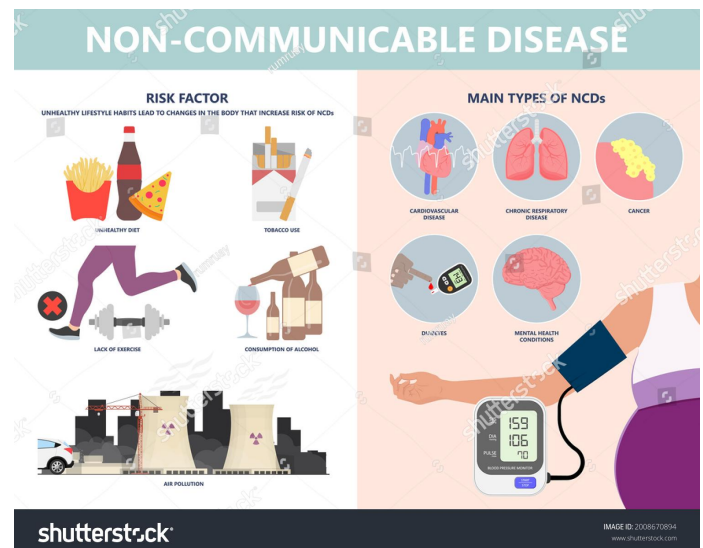
India stands at the cusp of economic glory, aspiring to become a \$5 trillion economy and a global powerhouse. However, there is a “silent epidemic” of **non-communicable diseases** (NCDs) that threatens our economic and developmental ambitions. India must urgently embrace a preventive health-care mindset **one can heal before there is a need to heal**.

**Syllabus:** Mains – GS II (HEALTH - GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTION)

### Non communicable diseases

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are chronic conditions that are not transmitted from person to person. They typically progress slowly and have long durations. Examples include:

- ❖ Cardiovascular diseases (e.g., heart disease, stroke)
- ❖ Cancers
- ❖ Chronic respiratory diseases (e.g., asthma, COPD)
- ❖ Diabetes



- ❖ Mental health disorders (e.g., depression, schizophrenia)
- ❖ Autoimmune diseases (e.g., rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis)
- ❖ Other conditions such as chronic kidney disease, neurodegenerative disorders, and genetic conditions.

## Causes of NCDs

NCDs arise from a combination of factors:

- ❖ Behavioral risks: Unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and alcohol misuse.
- ❖ Environmental factors: Air pollution, UV exposure, and weather changes.
- ❖ Genetic predisposition: Inherited mutations or genetic disorders like thalassemia.
- ❖ Physiological/metabolic factors: Obesity, hypertension, hyperglycemia, and hyperlipidemia.

## Problems and Effects

### ❖ Health Impact

- ✧ NCDs are the leading cause of mortality globally, accounting for 74% of deaths annually.
- ✧ They contribute to premature deaths, especially in low- and middle-income countries.
- ✧ NCDs often lead to disability, reducing quality of life for affected individuals.

### ❖ Economic Impact

- ✧ Direct costs include healthcare expenditures for treatment and management.
- ✧ Indirect costs arise from reduced productivity and human capital due to illness or premature death.
- ✧ NCDs are estimated to cost \$47 trillion globally between 2010–2030.

### ❖ Social Impact

- ✧ NCDs perpetuate poverty due to high out-of-pocket healthcare expenses.
- ✧ Families face financial strain and loss of income due to caregiving responsibilities.

### ❖ Political Challenges

- ✧ Limited government investment in NCD prevention and control.

- ✧ Insufficient data on NCD prevalence hampers effective policymaking.

## Issues Faced by Patients

- ❖ Patients with NCDs often experience:
- ❖ High healthcare costs leading to financial hardship.
- ❖ Limited access to early diagnosis and treatment in low-income settings.
- ❖ Social stigma associated with certain conditions like mental health disorders.
- ❖ Reduced quality of life due to chronic pain or disability.

## Initiatives by WHO

The World Health Organization has implemented several strategies:

- ❖ Global Action Plan for NCDs (2013–2020): Extended to 2030 with a roadmap focusing on prevention, management, and monitoring.
- ❖ Objectives include reducing risk factors (e.g., tobacco use), strengthening health systems, promoting universal health coverage, and improving surveillance.
- ❖ Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): Target 3.4 aims to reduce premature deaths from NCDs by one-third by 2030.
- ❖ WHO emphasizes cost-effective interventions like promoting healthy lifestyles and improving air quality.

## Initiatives in India

India has undertaken several measures:

- ❖ National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases & Stroke (NPCDCS):
- ❖ Launched in 2010 to strengthen infrastructure for early diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up care.
- ❖ Establishment of NCD clinics at district levels offering free diagnostics and medications.
- ❖ National Multisectoral Action Plan (2017–2022):
- ❖ Focuses on integrated coordination across sectors for prevention.
- ❖ Includes health promotion campaigns and strengthening health systems.

## Way Forward

**Strengthen Primary Healthcare:** Increase access to affordable diagnostic tools and treatments.

**Using Digital health technology-** from smart phones to big data analytics, as we have more than 750 million smartphone users.

The role of AI in predictive health modelling. AI algorithms can analyse vast databases to predict individual's risk for various NCDs with remarkable accuracy

**Promote Healthy Lifestyles and government measures:** Launch nationwide campaigns targeting behavioral risk factors like smoking cessation and physical activity

Health care providers must pivot from **reactive cure model to preventive care model.**

**Public** policies should be health oriented: Urban planning should create green spaces for exercises; education curricula should include health and nutrition

Food industry regulation should encourage reduced salt and sugar.

**Invest in Research:** Develop innovative solutions tailored to local needs.

**Multisectoral Collaboration:** Encourage partnerships between governments, NGOs, and private sectors for resource mobilization.