

Life style Changes of Indian Families & Its Impact on Health

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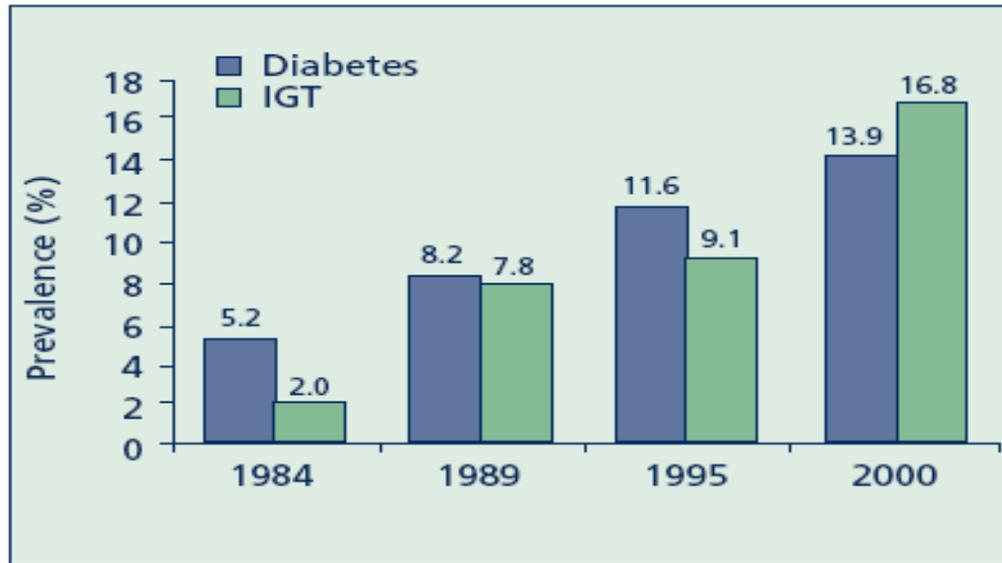
Abstract

Demographic & Socioeconomic changes influence the living & working habits of populations. Economic growth, modernization, urbanization & socialization have changed the life style of Indian families. The transition from a traditional to modern lifestyle, consumption of diets rich in fat and calories combined with a high level of mental stress has compounded the problem further. With a shift in eating habits & the adoption of a sedentary life style has lead to the increasing prevalence of life style diseases like Obesity, Diabetes, Hypertension, Coronary heart disease, Metabolic syndrome and Cancer, all across India in the last few decades. : In a study from south India it was 27.2% in urban area and 2 % in rural area in 1989, went up to 30% in 2000 in urban and 17% in rural population. Similarly in Delhi female population it was 34.4% in 1994 went up to 48.6 in the year 1999. Life style changes in families are related with physical activity, food habits and tobacco consumption / smoking. These are mainly due to affluence, urbanization, mechanization .Life style changes in families have a major impact on the health of the nation. In past few decades we have witnessed a rapid transformation in the lifestyle of Indians, particularly those living in urban India. Economic growth, modernization, urbanization & socialization have changed the life style of Indian families. With a shift in eating habits & the adoption of a sedentary life style that has resulted in rapid escalation of lifestyle diseases with alarming projection by WHO that by 2020, seven million Indians may die of lifestyle diseases. Elimination of these risk factors can prevent---Diabetes, stroke, heart disease by 80% and cancer by 40%. It's time to act now to adopt a healthy life style in the families by healthy diet, regular exercise, no tobacco and stress control and say no to drugs.

KEYWORD : Obesity, Diabetes, Hypertension, Coronary heart disease, Metabolic syndrome, affluence, urbanization, mechanization

Demographic & Socioeconomic changes influence the living & working habits of populations. Economic growth, modernization, urbanization & socialization have changed the life style of Indian families. The transition from a traditional to modern lifestyle, consumption of diets rich in fat and calories combined with a high level of mental stress has compounded the problem further. With a shift in eating habits & the adoption of a sedentary life style has lead to the increasing prevalence of life style diseases like Obesity, Diabetes, Hypertension, Coronary heart disease, Metabolic syndrome and Cancer, all across India in the last few decades. Apart from that India is facing economic burden also. WHO estimates that mortality from diabetes, heart disease and stroke costs about \$210 billion in India in the year 2005. Much of the heart disease and stroke in these estimates was linked to diabetes. WHO estimates that diabetes, heart disease and stroke together will cost about \$ 333.6 billion over the next 10 years in India alone.

Prevalence of diabetes in India : It was reported to be 5.2% in 1984, 11.6 % in 1995 and had gone up to 13.9% in 2000



Recent data suggest a significant load of diabetes cases in India, rising from 2.0 billion in 2000 to 4.6 crore by 2016.

Prevalence of hypertension: It was 4% in 1954, 11% in 1984 and went up to 25% in 1994 in Urban area and 10% in rural area.

Prevalence of obesity: In a study from south India it was 27.2% in urban area and 2 % in rural area in 1989, went up to 30% in 2000 in urban and 17% in rural population. Similarly in Delhi female population it was 34.4% in 1994 went up to 48.6 in the year 1999. Even childhood obesity is on the rise in India, according to Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition it was reported to be 12.4% in boys and 9.9% in girls between the age group of 9-15 yrs.

Prevalence of coronary heart disease: It is also on the rise, study by Dr. K.K. Sethi in 2002 , it was 4% in 1960, 6.5% in 1968 and went up to 11% in 2001 in urban population of India. There is alarming projection from World Health Organization that sedentary lifestyle could very well be among the 10 leading causes of death and disability in the world and by the year 2020, seven million Indians will die of life style diseases. Life style changes in families are related with physical activity, food habits and tobacco consumption / smoking. These are mainly due to --

- affluence
- urbanization
- mechanization

Urbanization in India is on the rise. In 1901 it was 11%, in 1951 it became 17.6% and by 2001, 27.8% people were living in urban area. Technological advances, while making life easy, encouraged sedentary way of living, paving way for lifestyle diseases. India's rapid economic growth could be slowed by the sharp rise in the prevalence of heart disease, diabetes and stroke and the successful information technology is likely to be the hardest hit. Long working hours, night shifts and a sedentary life style are the main cause. There has been a growing report of depression and family breakdown also. A lot of men seem to complain about too many business trips where they have to be away from their family. It is seen as a negative if you have to travel extensively. For many, a sedentary lifestyle is not a choice but a result Almost 47% of the workforce in Indian industries, especially in urban areas, were found to be overweight while

around 27% were suffering from hypertension. Around 10% of those surveyed were also found to be diabetic

CHANGING LIFE STYLE OF CHILDREN:

- Because of computer games, gizmos and other indoor activities, children are spending lesser time playing sports.
- They burn less calories and thus tend to gain weight.
- Along with sedentary lifestyle, there is also academic pressure that our children face every day. There is homework, tuitions, exams, grades etc to worry about and these pressures often result in less physical activity
- Today, children lead sedentary lives and even parents don't have the time to play with children
- Outings now are more about going to malls, not gardens / parks
- Watching TV most of the time

FOOD HABITS: CHANGING SCENARIO

1950s-1960s people used to ate at home 2-3 times/day and because of rapid transformation in the lifestyle of Indians, particularly those living in urban India, has resulted in dramatic increase in the demand for processed food. The main reason why processed food is luring the urban Indians is the convenience that it offers to cooking, as they don't need to spend hours in kitchen to get that appetizing food. These trends have largely impacted the Indian food-processing sector, as there's been a jump in the demand for processed, ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook food. Amount of money spent by Indian on foods outside home has been assessed to have more than doubled over the last ten years to nearly \$5Billion a year. Also, it's likely to double in the five years to come

Role of Media:

Famous media personalities endorse aerated drinks, fried foods like chips that give nothing but ample calories. Children take these personalities as their role models and ape them.

Advertising gimmicks:

Free gifts given with chips, chocolate etc. encourage kids as well as parents to buy foods that they don't require. Modern life style induces people to eat more than their bodies need even if they are aware of pitfalls. At the crux of the food crisis is a psychological disorder out of affluence.

People being out of tune with their own bodies. The share of hotels & restaurants has increased from 14.3% of GDP in 200-2001 to 25 % in 2007-08. Packed food industry is growing at about 20% /annum. A growing number of people are not taking the right decisions on how much & what to eat. There are indications that dietary distortions are on the rise in India.

Rising number of birth day parties, Kitty parties, marriage anniversaries, outdoor meals, food corners, pizza huts and MacDonal'd's are the effects of economic growth, Modernization, urbanization and socialization.

Dietary changes that take place as Indian populations move up the socio-economic scale are....

- Increased intake of legumes, vegetables , milk, animal fat
- Substitution of coarse grain by polished grains resulting in the decreased fibre intake
- Increase intake of edible fat with increasing consumption of saturated hydrogenated fat in the middle class and Indian ghee in the more prosperous segments

- Increase intake of calories & sweets
- Increase in overall intake of energy in relation to the expenditure resulting in obesity

Demographic changes and Smoking / Tobacco use:

There has been a marked increase in urbanization in India. The affluence as measured by per capita net domestic product, growth of production & human development index has also increased. The average annual growth rate in gross domestic product (GDP) was—3.4% in 1970-80, 5.4% in 1980-91 and 8% in recent years. Smoking and tobacco use became a fashion statement in the mid of the last century. This phase was characterised by a large increase in its consumption which was driven by prevalent attitudes and morals. The Populations of low & middle income countries have been increasing their cigarette consumption since about 1970. The per capital annual consumption in terms of cigarettes increased from 1970 up to 1992. But there is evidence of slow down since then. Studies in urban & rural populations reported a high prevalence of tobacco use among the illiterate as compared to that in literates it seems that improving the literacy levels can reduce the tobacco consumption

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS:

With economic growth, Modernization, Urbanization, Socialization and garbage of information there seems to be more depression, more family breakdown, more suicides, and homicides. Visits to psychiatrist is on the rise.

SEXUAL HEALTH:

New lifestyle affects India's sexual health also. India is reporting more sexual disorders, divorces and extra-marital affairs, according to some leading sexologists. Problems related to sex were due to changing food habits, lack of exercise, unusual work hours and more stress.

CONCLUSION:

Life style changes in families have a major impact on the health of the nation. In past few decade we have witnessed a rapid transformation in the lifestyle of Indians, particularly those living in urban India. Economic growth, modernization, urbanization & socialization has changed the life style of Indian families. With a shift in eating habits & the adoption of a sedentary life style that has resulted in rapid escalation of lifestyle diseases with alarming projection by WHO that by 2020, seven million Indians may die of lifestyle diseases. Elimination of these risk factors can prevent--Diabetes, stroke, heart disease by 80% and cancer by 40%. It's time to act now to adopt a healthy life style in the families by healthy diet, regular exercise, no tobacco and stress control and say no to drugs.

“Leave your drugs in the chemist's pot if you can heal the patient with food”

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