

India added 20 yrs to life expectancy at birth in 45 yrs

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India's life expectancy at birth inched up to 69.7 in the 2015-19 period. However, the gap between life expectancy at birth and life expectancy at age one or age five is the biggest in states with the highest infant mortality (IMR), Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Such huge gaps in how long the average person can expect to live at birth and at one year is evident in several states, including Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Assam and Odisha.

Over a 45-year period, India had added about 20 years to its life expectancy at birth from 49.7 in 1970-75 to 69.7 by 2015-19. Odisha has had the highest increase, of over 24 years, from 45.7 to 69.8 years followed by Tamil Nadu, where it increased from 49.6 to 72.6. Uttar Pradesh had the second lowest life expectancy of 65.6 in 2015-19, after Chhattisgarh with just 65.3.

However, from having the lowest life expectancy in India of just 43 years in 1970-75, it has increased by 22.6 years in Uttar Pradesh.

Within India, there are huge variations across states and between urban and rural areas. Urban women in Himachal Pradesh had the highest life expectancy at birth of 82.3 years while at the other end, rural men in Chhattisgarh had the lowest, just 62.8 years, a gap of 15.

8 years. In Assam, the gap in life expectancy between rural and urban areas is almost eight years. The state with the next highest urban-rural gap of five years was Himachal Pradesh. Kerala is the only state where rural life expectancy was higher than urban life expectancy for both men and women, while in Uttarakhand that was the case among women.

Worryingly, in Uttarakhand life expectancy at birth has reduced in the recent past. After touching 71.7 in 2010-14, it was down to 70.6 by 2015-19 showing a steady downward trend in the intervening period. Bihar and Jharkhand remained the only states where male life expectancy was higher than for women in both urban and rural areas.

In the neighbourhood, Bangladesh and Nepal, which had lower IMRs than India (24 compared to

28), now have higher life expectancy at birth of 72. 1 and 70. 5 respectively, according to the UN's Human Development Report, 2019. Japan has the highest life expectancy of 85. Norway, Australia, Switzerland and Iceland had a life expectancy of 83. The Central African Republic had the lowest life expectancy of 54 followed by Lesotho and Chad at 55 in 2020.

C'GARH HAS LOWEST LIFE EXPECTANCY

	Male	Female	Total (in %)
Delhi	74.3	77.5	75.9
Kerala	72.3	78	75.2
J&K	72.6	76.1	74.2
Himachal Pradesh	69.9	77.1	73.1
Punjab	71.1	74.7	72.8
Maharashtra	71.6	74	72.7
Tamil Nadu	70.6	74.9	72.6
West Bengal	71	73.2	72.1
Uttarakhand	67.6	73.9	70.6
Andhra Pradesh	68.9	71.8	70.3
Gujarat	67.9	72.8	70.2
Haryana	67.7	72.6	69.9
Odisha	68.5	71.1	69.8
Karnataka	67.9	71.3	69.5
Jharkhand	70.2	68.8	69.4
Bihar	69.6	68.8	69.2
Rajasthan	66.8	71.3	69
Assam	66.8	68.3	67.5
Madhya Pradesh	65.2	69.1	67
Uttar Pradesh	65	66.2	65.6
Chhattisgarh	63.7	66.9	65.3
India	68.4	71.1	69.7

Source: SRS abridged life tables 2015-19

