



# Covid-19: India's Leading Cause of Death

## Why in News

According to the most recent estimates by the **Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME)**, the **Covid-19** pandemic has emerged the biggest cause of death in India.

- IHME is an independent global health research centre at the University of Washington, US.

## Key Points

### ▪ Death due to Covid-19 Pandemic:

- India has recorded **more than 19 million cases of coronavirus**-second only to the US and has **confirmed more than 2,15,000 deaths**.
- The **human toll of the pandemic is more than double the number of humans killed in over 320 natural disasters** during the recent two decades (2000-2019).

### ▪ Other Top Causes of Deaths in India:

- Ischemic heart disease (second),
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (third),
- Strokes (fourth),
- **Diarrhoeal diseases** (fifth),
- **Neonatal disorders** (sixth),
- **Lower respiratory infections** (seventh),
- **Tuberculosis** (eighth),
- **Diabetes mellitus** (ninth) and
- **Chronic liver diseases**, including cirrhosis (tenth).

### ▪ Reasons for Covid-19 being the Leading Cause of Death:

- The **'double mutant' B.1.617** Indian variant of SARS-CoV-2 has heightened risk.
- Lives have been lost due to the **lack of preparedness of governments**, India's **poor health infrastructure**, **lack of medical oxygen** and even **medicines**.
- The **Centre and state governments have been accused and held responsible** by the **Supreme Court** and High Court for undermining the scale of crisis and failure to manage it.
- Experts have also been **unhappy with India's Covid-19 vaccine procurement and pricing policy**. States have to await their quota of vaccines.

## Way Forward

- The IHME advises governments **to impose strict physical distancing norms** for six weeks at least once deaths cross 8 per million.
- The Supreme Court advised both Centre as well as states **to resort to lockdowns** if needed but to also ensure livelihoods weren't impacted.

**Source: DTE**

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