Lifestyle diseases up due to pollution, unhealthy food choices:

New Delhi, Nov 27 (PTI) Lifestyle or non-communicable diseases are on the rise in India due to pollution and unhealthy food choices, experts said today.

Delhi is much more polluted today than it was in the 1990s, Sunita Narain of the Centre of Science and Environment (CSE) said at a panel discussion. The panel discussion was organised at an event to release a report on Body Burden: Lifestyle Diseases”.

The panel of doctors, including renowned cardiologist Naresh Trehan, outlined the repercussions of polluting environment and rise in non-communicable or lifestyle diseases in the country. Trehan laid emphasis on more contribution from the civil society to force the governments to take steps to bring down pollution levels.

"Civil society never really woke up. Nobody raise voice collectively to make the governments take steps to prevent air pollution," he said referring to the recent smog in Delhi. He also suggested for simple, short-term solutions that can be adopted by people to help fight pollution.

Pawan Agarwal, chief executive officer of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), detailed initiatives and measures taken by the body to make food healthier for the people. "Businesses are now recognizing that they have to produce healthy food," he said, referring to the campaign and initiatives of the FSSAI.

"We are now eating less healthy food than we were eating 15 years ago," he said and added that the authority was working on a standard book on heavy metal content of food that will be released soon.

Dr Sanjeev Bagai highlighted the toxins present in air that also pollute soil and water and enter our food chain.

The urban poor are the "worst affected" due to diabetes because of lack of healthy food, said Dr Ambrish Mithal, head of Endocrinology and Diabetes division at Medanta Hospital. He said that changing eating behaviour is the biggest challenge as far as controlling diabetes is concerned and it should begin from the childhood.

Trehan suggested for regular yoga, along with healthy food and light weight exercise, to develop muscle mass in the body to stay fit in the long run.