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Under-nutrition and obesity both are forms of malnutrition. India, as one knows has the second largest population among all countries of the world. Though malnutrition affects the general health of population, in India obesity in particular has begun to affect children more than the general population.

In India obesity is a comparatively recent dilemma, whereas under-nutrition has presented itself in the country time and time again. Thus the underfed vastly outnumber the overfed. But recent research in India shows that neither the rich nor the poor have a healthy diet.

Of India's more than one billion people nearly 30% are living in cities, but expenditure on food is lesser in urban areas than in rural areas. That may sound reassuring, as according to Professor Amartya Sen, a Nobel Laureate: "Hunger is quiet violence" and it seems that the poor Indians are not faring too badly. But, one must understand that malnutrition is not an insufficient diet or not having enough food intake, it is actually an improper diet. An individual will experience malnutrition if the appropriate amount of, or quality of nutrients comprising a healthy diet are not consumed for an extended period of time.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) malnutrition is the single gravest threat to the world's population. In India alone the number of undernourished people is around 212 million.

Under-nutrition is a cause of not receiving required nutrients. Amartya Sen wrote in his book *The Argumentative Indian*: "About half of all Indian children are chronically under-nourished and more than half of all the adult women are anaemic in Africa. Africa still manages to ensure a higher level of nourishment than India." Under-nutrition can turn fatal unless cured by the age of ten.

Obesity is a disease in which excess body fat has accumulated to such an extent that health may be negatively affected. It is commonly defined as a body mass index (weight divided by height squared) of 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher. The main causes of obesity are over-nutrition, a sedentary lifestyle, depression, fast food and study pressure (in case of children). Often obese people refuse to realize the problem, which may be genetic or caused due to the reasons mentioned above. Obesity can lead to clogging of blood vessels, thus leading to several cardiovascular diseases and other problems, which may lead to death. In spite of outdoor games and exercise being realistic options to reduce obesity people ignore them. Thus, obesity begets obesity.

It is up to us whether we urban Indians will move forward, towards a better lifestyle that will help to get rid of obesity from the horizon of medical

research. At the same time we have to change in such a way that in rural areas where cases of under-nutrition are rampant, we can provide enough nutritious food to keep malnutrition at bay. Together obesity and under-nutrition, under the banner of malnutrition poses a great threat. We must ensure that politics, lack of public service and petty narrow-mindedness do not stop us from achieving our goal to push the major health dilemma of malnutrition beyond the visible horizon.