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Looking at the street urchins on Indian Streets, on the way to work, their skinny, undernourished framework makes us realize that our agricultural boom has still refrained from directing food to each and every household in India.

However, the heading of a report in the morning newspaper stating – “Obesity on a high rise in India”, brings us face to face with a dilemma – “What is India’s problem – Obesity or Malnutrition?”

A very difficult question indeed, but then before this double edged sword poses any further peril to us we need to understand these nourishment vices in order to find a solution to them . Technically speaking, this problem is complicated to the extent that we cannot clearly demarcate which one of the two is potentially a greater threat.

On one hand there is the fact that there has been a massive agricultural boom in India post the 1960’s due to the Green Revolution and yet on the other hand we hear of countless people dying of hunger, countless deaths of malnourished newborns. So the question is where is this surplus food production taking us? The inference derived is that there is an unequal distribution of money and food in India. In other words we need to devise a path of mediocrity that caters to the basic requirements of the general masses in such a way that it is neither overly- sufficient nor insufficient.

Coming to the moot point, let us examine what obesity and malnutrition are? The former is a case of over nutrition, where as the latter refers to faulty or inadequate nutrition. The main reason behind obesity is our ever changing life styles, it is that choice made wherein we prefer a high calorie low nutrition burger to the low calorie high nutrition staple diet. High blood pressure, tension, cardiovascular diseases, are all symptoms of obesity.

Malnutrition on the other hand results from an unbalanced diet that is deficient in nutrients. Diseases like anemia which are highly prevalent in India are an absolute evidence of malnutrition, not to forget the ever increasing mortality and morbidity rates. A number of other diseases like marasmus, kwashiorkor, rickets, osteoporosis, are also the offshoots of malnutrition.

Agricultural outlay has been rising successively with the progress of the consecutive Five Year Plans. From rupees 601 crores in the First Five Year Plan, to a booming rupees 36586 crore in the Seventh Five Year Plan, and even more so in the recent plans, our country has clearly flourished in agriculture. Also the fact that very recently U.S.A and Japan had been importing food from India to remedy their food shortage is testimony to the fact that we are not

only producing food that is sufficient for us but also managing to cater to the needs of other nations. But then why has the rate of malnourished children risen from an 18% to a staggering 45% merely in two decades.

The fact that malnutrition and obesity co-exist is no doubt complicated to understand, but we have to manage to find a mediating solution for the two.

The government has to improve its socio-economic infrastructure keeping in mind the needs of both strata of society such that the food reaching every Indian's house is neither overly exceeding in quantity and nor insufficient.