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In this era of modern medicine, humans can cure and prevent most diseases, but two conditions have come to the forefront: obesity and malnutrition.

Both Obesity and malnutrition may be opposite in cause, but are equally harmful to health. In India, both of these conditions are noticed among the populace and they can shorten lifespan considerably. Here arises the question about which should be regarded as India's current healthcare dilemma.

In my opinion, malnutrition should be regarded as our nation's healthcare dilemma for a number of reasons.

The predominance of malnutrition in our country is due to the fact that a sizeable percentage of the population is below the poverty line. Many poor people simply cannot afford enough food to sufficiently feed themselves or their families. Most people in this condition are those working for minimum wages in high labor utilizing jobs. Such people often have many children in order to increase the number of earning members in the family. The children born into these families also suffer from malnutrition.

Proper nutrition is the consumption of correct amounts and proportions of the right types of food. Due to the high rate of illiteracy, many people do not know about what to eat and how much to eat and so they do not have a proper diet and this leads to the spread of diseases, like Kwashiorkor and Marasmus.

Due to malnutrition, the human body does not function properly. It lowers immunity and makes the body susceptible to diseases. Improper brain functioning and reduction of physical fitness can cause further damage.

Even though malnutrition may be more dominant in Indian society, obesity can neither be ignored nor given a backseat. In India, it is a disease of the wealthier classes.

Like malnutrition, obesity leads to a number of diseases like heart disease, diabetes and blood pressure. It also leads to reduction of physical fitness, as there is a substantial increase in body weight.

People who are well off in terms of money often eat very rich foods with low nutritional value or junk foods with high fat content. Consumption of such foods combined with lack of exercise leads to obesity.

With time, the proportion of obese people is set to rise as economic development will lead to an eventual rise in income. Less people will suffer from malnutrition and more people will become financially well to do and in some cases obese.

It is also seen that, among various strata of society, people, especially women, try to attain slim figures by excessive dieting. Such people often become anorexic and suffer from malnutrition.

Obesity and malnutrition may vary in the number of people affected and the type of disease caused but both are dangers to health and burdens to the society. Therefore they should be tackled with urgency. Awareness regarding proper nutrition should be spread among everyone.

Good nutrition is essential for a healthy population. as the saying goes - "good eating is the first step to good health."