

India under serious burden of anaemia, obesity: report

India is facing a serious burden of malnutrition as well as obesity, according to a global report which shows that while half the country's women suffer from anaemia, at least 22% of adult women are overweight.

The *Global Nutrition Report 2017*, which looked at 140 countries including India, found 'significant burdens' of three important forms of malnutrition used as an indicator of broader trends.

These include childhood stunting, anaemia in women of reproductive age, and overweight adult women.

Latest figures show that 38 per cent of children under five are affected by stunting — children too short for their age due to lack of nutrients, suffering irreversible damage to brain capacity.

About 21 per cent of children under 5 are defined as 'wasted' or 'severely wasted' — meaning they do not weigh enough for their height.

Over half of women of reproductive age — 51% — suffer from anaemia — a serious condition that can have long term health impacts for mother and child.

More than 22% of adult women are overweight, a rising concern as women are disproportionately affected by the global obesity epidemic, according to the report.

While the country has shown some progress in addressing under-5 stunting, it has made no progress or presents worse outcomes in the percentage of reproductive-age women with anaemia, and is off course in terms of reaching targets for reducing adult obesity and diabetes, the report said.

"The Global Nutrition Report highlights that the double burden of undernutrition and obesity needs to be tackled as part of India's national nutrition strategy," said Purnima Menon, independent expert on the *Global Nutrition Report*.

"For undernutrition, especially, major efforts are needed to close the inequality gap," said Menon, Senior Research Fellow in the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)'s South Asia Office in New Delhi.

The *Global Nutrition Report 2017* calls for nutrition to be placed at the heart of efforts to end poverty, fight disease, raise educational standards and tackle climate change.

"We know that a well—nourished child is one third more likely to escape poverty," said Jessica Fanzo, Professor at Johns Hopkins University in the US.

"They will learn better in school, be healthier and grow into productive contributors to their economies. Good nutrition provides the brainpower, the 'grey matter infrastructure' to build the economies of the future," said Fanzo, also the Global Nutrition Report Co-Chair.

The report also found that 88% of countries studied face a serious burden of two or three forms of malnutrition.

It highlights the damaging impact this burden is having on broader global development efforts.

The report found that overweight and obesity are on the rise in almost every country, with two billion of the world's seven billion people now overweight or obese and a less than one per cent chance of meeting the global target of halting the rise in obesity and diabetes by 2025.

In India, 16% of adult men and 22% of adult women are overweight.

Lifestyle-related risk factors are being cited, compounded by an inadequate number of treatment centres in the region

Without policies to stop the worrying spread of antimicrobial resistance, the mortality rate could be disturbing

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