

CORRESPONDENCE

serve as a warning against the inducement of any such activity that may create an environment in the sea which poses as a potential site for becoming a dead zone¹⁶. Addressing the issue of invasive species will be a step forward in the direction of eliminating one of the serious threats faced by oceans. Thus, a ban on introducing invasive species that eat into the natural ecosystem, through promulgation of a proper law for the same, will go a long way in upholding sustainable development along the coasts of India.

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Dual burden of malnutrition and hidden hunger among tribal children of North East India

The new edition of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* includes a supplementary volume on the double burden of undernutrition and obesity in Latin

America. It could gather nine articles from different countries signifying the major health implication of the same. The implication of double burden is

found to be major in some countries like Uruguay¹, but in others like Brazil, its impact is trivial due to the inclusive social policies². But the condition is

Table 1. Dual burden of stunting and stunted overweight cases among the Mising tribal children of North East India (according to WHO 2007 criteria)

Age (years)	Boys					Girls				
	Total	Total stunted (WHO, 2007)		Stunted overweight (WHO, 2007)		Total	Total stunted (WHO, 2007)		Stunted overweight (WHO, 2007)	
		Number	%	Number	%		Number	%	Number	%
6	96	41	42.7	0	0.0	105	48	45.7	3	2.9
7	93	34	36.6	3	3.2	102	38	37.3	5	4.9
8	100	24	24.0	4	4.0	101	34	33.7	3	3.0
9	96	41	42.7	4	4.2	100	26	26.0	7	7.0
10	107	12	11.2	3	2.8	105	53	50.5	7	6.7
11	98	16	16.3	5	5.1	105	29	27.6	5	4.8
12	101	23	22.8	5	5.0	107	28	26.2	3	2.8
13	103	26	25.2	8	7.8	92	27	29.4	8	8.7
14	90	18	20.0	5	5.6	91	36	39.6	5	5.5
15	90	19	21.1	3	3.3	97	36	37.1	5	5.2
16	91	32	35.2	8	8.8	100	33	33.0	7	7.0
17	93	25	26.9	6	6.5	104	32	30.8	8	7.7
18	99	41	41.4	5	5.1	100	30	30.0	11	11.0
19	96	33	34.4	9	9.4	90	23	25.6	7	7.8
Total	1353	385	28.5	68	5.0	1399	473	33.8	84	6.0

worst in the developing countries going through the initial phase of nutrition transition³. Dual burden of malnutrition can be found at the population level, household level or individual level⁴. Most recent updates from Africa also show similar events of micronutrient deficiency, stunting, anaemia and overweight among preschool children⁵. The dual burden of malnutrition at population level shows existence of stunting as well as overweight/obesity within the same group or population. This is well marked in the countries already undergoing nutrition transition. The existence of dual burden within the same household mostly deals with the overnourished mother having undernourished child. But the existence of the dual burden of malnutrition within the same subject often calls for attention of concomitant presence of overnutrition and hidden hunger. This situation has got little attention in India. It may be more marked among the tribal children of developing nations undergoing nutrition transition. This has

been substantiated with a study among particular tribal children of North East India (Table 1). These children are getting enough calories to become fatter, but lack one or more micronutrients required for linear growth. Zinc deficiency might be the major cause of such outcome. Here the dual burden of malnutrition is not transient at infancy, but is propagated to the adolescents also. India is on the verge of submitting its report of millennium development goal by 2015. Though much has been done for accomplishing the project, the prevalence of micronutrient deficiency particularly among the tribal children continues to be a public health concern. Most of these children practice open-air defecation which also makes them prone to hook-worm infestation leading to iron deficiency anaemia. Therefore, not only micronutrient supplementation but also adequate measures for absorption in the body as well as dietary diversification are the need of the hour to combat the situation.

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