

The Global Hunger Index 2024

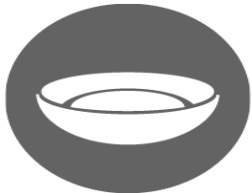
**GS2: HEALTH & GS3:
ECONOMY, INCLUSIVE
GROWTH**

Why in news?

The Global Hunger Index for 2024 states that a '**serious**' level of hunger is prevalent in India. It ranks India 105th among 127 countries, giving it a score of 27.3.

About GHI

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels. GHI scores are based on the values of four component indicators:



Undernourishment: the share of the population with insufficient caloric intake.



Child stunting: the share of children under age five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition



Child wasting: the share of children under age five who have low weight for their height, reflecting *acute* undernutrition



Child mortality: the share of children who die before their fifth birthday, partly reflecting the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments

Based on the values of the four indicators, a GHI score is calculated on a 100-point scale reflecting the severity of hunger, where 0 is the best possible score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst.

Each country's GHI score is classified by severity, from *low* to *extremely alarming*.

- A score below 9.9 indicates low levels of hunger,
- 10-19.9 moderate,
- 35-49.9 alarming and
- above 50 extremely alarming.

What does it state about India?

- The report traced 13.7% of the population to be undernourished, 35.5% of children as stunted, 18.7% of children wasted and 2.9% of children dying before their fifth birthday.
- As per the survey, India has the highest child wasting rate globally.

However, the analysis states that India has demonstrated “**significant political will**” to transform the food and nutrition landscape — pointing to

- ✓ **The National Food Security Act,**
- ✓ **Poshan Abhiyan (National Nutrition Mission),**
- ✓ **PM Garib Kalyan Yojna (PMGKAY) and**
- ✓ **National Mission for Natural Farming.**

To illustrate a solution, the report points to the co-relation between the poor nutritional status of mothers being transferred onto their children.

There exists an ‘intergenerational pattern of undernutrition’ where the factors driving India’s high child wasting rate entail mothers inducted with insufficient weight gain during pregnancy and low birth weight among infants.

What about India’s GDP growth?

- The report states that the relationship between per capita GDP growth and low levels of hunger is “not always direct or guaranteed”.

- In other words, GDP growth alone does not result in improved food and nutritional security for the entire populace.
- Thus, the report puts forth the imperative for policies to emphasise pro-poor development alongside addressing social/economic inequalities.

What solutions does it propose?

- Broadly, the report proposes a multifaceted approach such as improved access to social safety nets, addressing complementary factors relating to well-being and nutrition, alongside dedicated approaches to assessing and provisioning nutritional needs.
- The first of the proposed measures entail **improved access to safety nets and cash transfers**.
- These, the report states, involve improving access to programs such as the **Public Distribution Scheme (PDS), PMGKAY and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)**.
- Other than this, it proposes investments in agriculture and a holistic food systems approach which promotes diversified, nutritious and ecological food production including nutri-cereals such as millets.
- Other dedicated approaches include making **effective investments in mother and child health**.
- It recommends a set of factors such as **improved water, sanitation and hygiene, among other things**.
- The report also seeks interventions to consider links between food and nutrition, gender and climate change.

What is the debate about data collection methodology?

- The previous year, the Ministry of Women and Child Development had expressed concerns about the data not being accessed from their ICT application 'Poshan Tracker'.
- The Ministry pointed out that UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank have acknowledged the tracker as a "**game-changer**".
- It observed child wasting being consistently below 7.2% on a month-on-month basis as compared to the 18.7% stated in the 2023 index.