



Balalatha's

CSB IAS ACADEMY

The Road Map to Mussoorie...



Mains iMPACT – 18/10/2024

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX 2024

SYLLABUS:

GS 2 > Social justice > Poverty and Hunger > Estimation of poverty

REFERENCE NEWS:

- Recently, the Global Hunger Index for 2024 places India at the 105th position among 127 countries with a 'serious' hunger level, indicating a score of 27.3.

ABOUT GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX (GHI):

- **Objective:** To comprehensively measure and track global, regional, and national hunger.
- **Published by:** Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe
- **Significance:** The report attempts to “raise awareness of United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) that endeavors to achieve ‘Zero Hunger’ by 2030.
- **Scores:** The GHI score is calculated on a 100-point scale reflecting the severity of hunger, where zero is the best score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst.
- The scoring system classifies hunger levels as follows:
 - Below 9.9: Low levels of hunger
 - 10-19.9: Moderate levels
 - **20-34.9: Serious levels**
 - 35-49.9: Alarming levels
 - Above 50: Extremely alarming levels
- The Global Hunger Index assesses hunger and malnutrition across countries using **four principal indicators:**
- **Undernourishment:** Measures the proportion of the population that is undernourished, indicating a lack of adequate caloric intake necessary for a healthy life.
- **Child Stunting:** Represents the percentage of children under the age of five who have a lower height for their age, signaling chronic undernutrition.

- **Child Wasting:** Tracks the percentage of children under the age of five who are underweight relative to their height, reflecting acute undernutrition.
- **Child Mortality:** Indicates the percentage of children who die before reaching their fifth birthday, often used as a broader indicator of the overall health and nutritional environment.

THE FINDINGS OF THE 2024 GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX (GHI):

- The **2024 Global Hunger Index (GHI)** reports a global score of **18.3**, categorized as **moderate**, representing only a marginal improvement from the **2016** score of **18.8**.
- The world remains significantly off-track from achieving the **Zero Hunger** target by **2030**, as many countries still face serious or alarming levels of hunger.
- In the 2024 Global Hunger Index (GHI), the **best-performing countries**, with very low hunger levels and scores below 5, include **Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Lithuania, Turkey, and Kuwait**. These nations have successfully implemented measures to reduce hunger and malnutrition, making them global leaders in food security and nutrition.
- On the other hand, the **worst performers in 2024** are **Somalia (GHI score: 44.1), Yemen (41.2), Chad (36.4), Madagascar (36.3), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (34.9)**. These countries continue to face extreme hunger challenges due to factors such as **conflict, economic instability, and climate crises**.

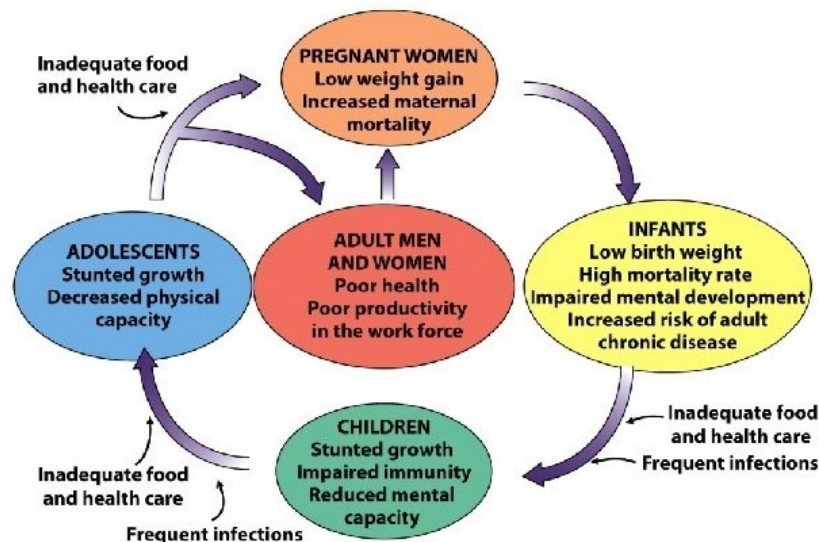
Findings About India in the GHI 2024:

- India ranks **105th** out of **127** countries in the 2024 GHI, with a score of **27.3**, categorized as **serious**. Despite being previously classified as "alarming" in 2000 with a score of **38.4**, India has shown gradual improvement. However, it still lags behind its South Asian neighbors, such as **Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka**, which are in the "**moderate**" category.
- **Undernourishment:** 13.7% of India's population is undernourished, indicating significant challenges in meeting basic dietary energy requirements.
- **Child Stunting:** High rates of stunting (35.5%) among children under five suggest long-term nutritional issues that aren't being adequately addressed.
- **Child Wasting:** **With the highest global rate of child wasting at 18.7%**, this highlights immediate nutritional deficiencies among Indian children.
- **Child Mortality:** The mortality rate of 2.9% for children under five underscores ongoing health and nutrition challenges.
- The GHI 2024 acknowledges India's efforts through various programs like the **National Food Security Act, Poshan Abhiyan, PM Garib Kalyan Yojna, and the National Mission for Natural Farming**.
- However, the index suggests that despite significant political will, there is considerable room for improvement, particularly in breaking the **cycle of intergenerational undernutrition** which is linked to the nutritional status of mothers and low birth weights.

CAUSES OF HUNGER IN INDIA

- **Declining agriculture output from small and marginal holdings:**

The Cycle of Undernutrition



○ Almost 50 million households in India are dependent on small and marginal holdings.

○ However the agricultural productivity of these holdings is declining due to reduced soil fertility, fragmented lands and fluctuating market prices.

○ **Declining income levels:**

○ The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18 has

revealed that rural unemployment stood is at 6.1 per cent, which is the highest since 1972-73.

○ These have adverse effects on the capacity to buy adequate food, especially when food prices have been on the rise.

○ **Ineffective implementation of PDS scheme:**

○ PDS scheme is not functioning well in many states due to corruption and inclusion errors.

○ For instance, states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh face significant leakage in food distribution, affecting the poorest sections of society.

○ **Protein hunger:**

○ Pulses are a major panacea to address protein hunger. However, there is a lack of budgetary allocation for inclusion of pulses in PDS.

○ Also there is no inclusion of eggs in the mid-day meal menus of many states.

○ **Micro-nutrient deficiency (hidden hunger):**

○ India faces a severe crisis in micro-nutrient deficiency due to poor dietary intakes, prevalence of diseases & non-fulfilment of increased micro-nutrient needs during pregnancy and lactation.

○ **Gender Inequality and Nutritional Disparities:**

○ Gender-based disparities exacerbate the problem of hunger and malnutrition in India.

○ Women and girls often experience unequal access to food within households, receiving smaller portions or lower-quality diets.

○ This inequity, coupled with the demands of maternal and child care, exposes them to higher nutritional risks, leading to chronic undernutrition.

○ **Intergenerational cycle of under-nutrition:**

○ Intergenerational undernutrition refers to the cycle where poor nutritional health is passed from one generation to the next, often due to inadequate maternal nutrition affecting fetal development and child health.

- **Climate Change and Environmental Stressors:**
 - India is susceptible to climate change-related environmental stressors, such as changing weather patterns, extreme weather events, and natural disasters.
 - These factors can disrupt agricultural production, leading to crop failures and food scarcity.
- **Lack of Audit for Nutritional Programmes:**
 - Although a number of programs with improving nutrition as their main component are planned in the country, there is minimal or no nutritional audit mechanism at local governance level.

GOVT. INITIATIVES TO TACKLE HUNGER:

- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** Provides subsidized food grains (5 kg per person per month) to about two-thirds of India's population through the Public Distribution System (PDS).
 - **One nation, One Ration card scheme:** 'One Nation One Ration Card' is a scheme implemented by the government providing for nation-wide portability of National Food Security Act benefits.
- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY):** Additional 5 kg of free food grains per person for NFSA beneficiaries, introduced during the pandemic and extended multiple times.
- **Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS):** Offers nutritious meals to schoolchildren in government schools to improve nutrition and attendance.
- **Poshan Abhiyaan:** Focuses on maternal and child nutrition through awareness, healthcare services, and supplements.
- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS):** Provides nutrition, healthcare, and education to children under six and their mothers via Anganwadi centers.
- **PM Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan:** Provides employment and income security to ensure food access for vulnerable families.
- **Eat Right India Movement:** Promotes safe, nutritious food choices to combat malnutrition.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** Offers financial support to pregnant and lactating women to improve their health and nutrition.
- **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY):** Provides 35 kg of food grains per month to the poorest families at subsidized rates.
- **Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN):** Continues the Mid-Day Meal scheme with improved nutritional standards through fortified foods.

WAY FORWARD:

- **Sustainable Agriculture Practices:** Implement farming methods that improve soil health and reduce chemical use, ensuring long-term sustainability. For example, **Sikkim Organic Mission** focuses on organic farming to protect soil fertility and reduce environmental damage.
- **Rural Employment Generation:** Create jobs in rural areas to reduce unemployment and boost incomes. For example, the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA)** ensures job opportunities in rural India.

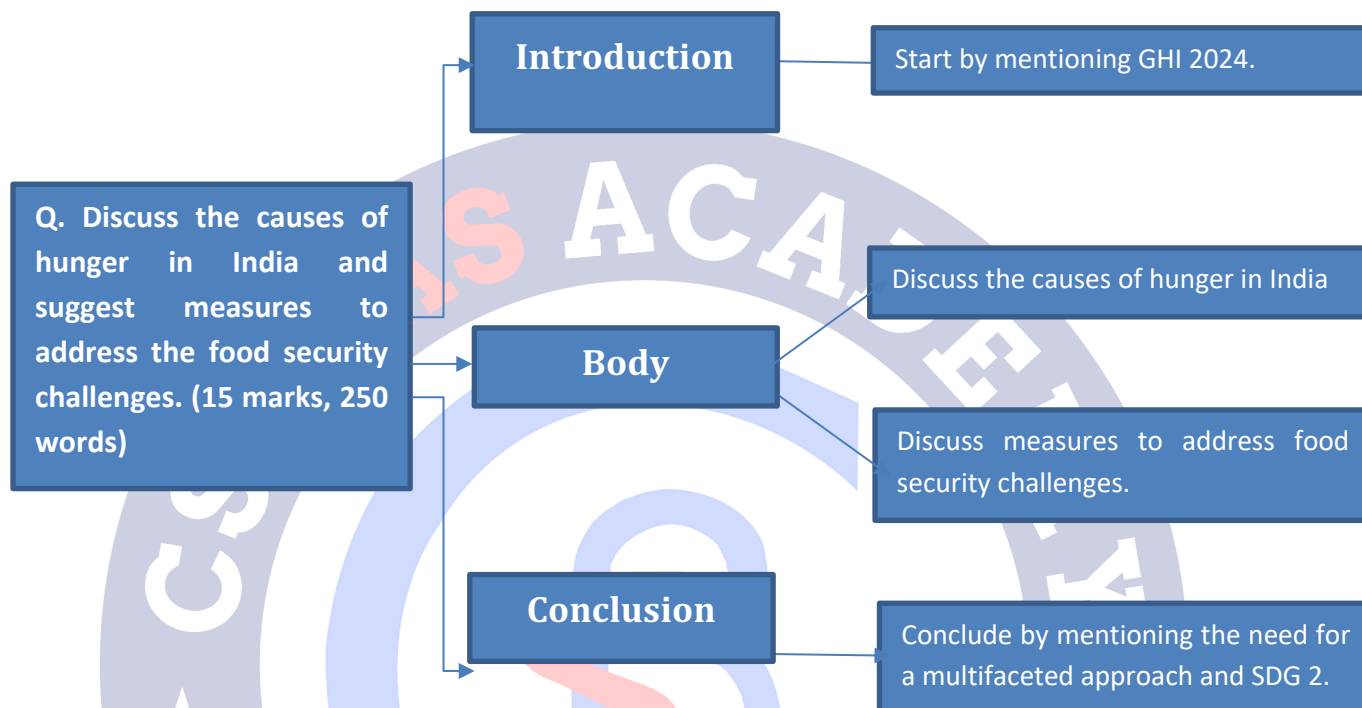
- **Technology-Driven PDS Reforms:** Use technology like biometric authentication to improve the efficiency of food distribution and reduce corruption. For example, **Rajasthan's Bhamashah Yojana** uses biometric verification to ensure the right beneficiaries receive food.
- **Nutrition-Specific Programs:** Address dietary deficiencies in vulnerable groups through targeted programs. For example, '**Take-Home Ration**' program by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, provides nutrient-rich food packages to pregnant and lactating women, focusing on their unique nutritional needs to combat malnutrition.
- **Mobile Nutritional Clinics:** Offer health assessments, dietary counseling, and supplementary feeding to underserved areas. For example, **mobile nutrition clinics** visit remote regions to deliver essential nutrition services.
- **Women's Self-Help Groups:** Promote women's economic empowerment through collective efforts. For example, **Kudumbashree in Kerala** helps women improve financial independence and gender equality.
- **Climate-Resilient Agriculture:** Encourage farming practices and crops that withstand climate change. For example, promoting drought-resistant crops ensures food security despite adverse weather conditions.
- **Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct educational campaigns to raise awareness about nutrition and sustainable farming. For example, the **Swasth Bharat Yatra** campaign promotes healthy eating and informed food choices.
- **Food Banks and Anti-Waste Initiatives:** Establish food banks to collect surplus food and distribute it to those in need. For example, **Feeding India** redistributes excess food from restaurants and events to minimize food waste.
- **International Collaboration:** Work with international organizations to improve food security. For example, India collaborates with the **World Food Programme (WFP)** and **UNICEF** to access expertise and resources during food crises.

CONCLUSION:

To address hunger in India and globally, future solutions must leverage technology, sustainability, and inclusivity. Precision farming, AI, and blockchain can enhance agricultural productivity and food distribution efficiency, while biotechnology can develop nutrient-rich, climate-resilient crops. Empowering women and promoting gender equality are essential for breaking the cycle of malnutrition. Global collaboration and innovative practices like urban farming can accelerate progress toward achieving Zero Hunger by 2030. By embracing transformative actions, India can ensure a hunger-free future where every citizen has access to nutritious food, fostering a healthier, more productive society.

PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. Discuss the causes of hunger in India and suggest measures to address the food security challenges. (15 marks, 250 words)

MODEL ANSWER:**MODEL ANSWER:**

India's position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2024, ranking 105th out of 127 countries with a serious hunger score of 27.3, highlights the pressing issue of hunger in the country. Despite progress from the year 2000, when India was classified as "alarming," significant challenges remain, particularly in undernourishment, child stunting, and wasting.

Causes of Hunger in India**1. Declining Agricultural Output:**

- Almost 50 million households in India rely on small and marginal land holdings. Due to declining soil fertility, fragmented lands, and volatile market prices, agricultural productivity has reduced, limiting access to food and income.
- Example: Farmers dependent on rain-fed agriculture face frequent crop failures due to erratic rainfall, exacerbated by climate change.

2. Rural Unemployment and Poverty:

- As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18, rural unemployment stands at 6.1%, its highest since 1972-73. This reduction in purchasing power makes it difficult for families to afford adequate nutrition, especially amidst rising food prices.

3. Inefficiencies in the Public Distribution System (PDS):

- Corruption, inclusion errors, and inefficient delivery mechanisms in many states reduce the effectiveness of the PDS, which is designed to provide food grains to vulnerable populations.
 - Example: States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh face significant leakage in food distribution, affecting the poorest sections of society.
4. **Protein and Micronutrient Deficiencies:**
- Protein hunger is a significant issue, as pulses, a key source of protein, are often missing from PDS allocations. Additionally, many states do not include eggs in mid-day meal menus, reducing access to essential nutrients.
 - India's hidden hunger, or micronutrient deficiency, is driven by poor diets, diseases, and a lack of focused nutritional programs, particularly for pregnant women and children.
5. **Gender Inequality and Nutritional Disparities:**
- Women and girls often receive less food than men in households, compounding their risk of malnutrition. This contributes to intergenerational undernutrition, where undernourished mothers give birth to underweight babies, continuing the cycle of poor health and hunger.
6. **Impact of Climate Change:**
- Climate change exacerbates food insecurity by affecting agricultural productivity through changing weather patterns, extreme events, and natural disasters. Droughts, floods, and unpredictable monsoons disrupt food production and availability.
 - Example: The floods in Assam in 2022 devastated crops, leading to food shortages and a spike in hunger levels in the region.

Measures to Address Food Security Challenges:

1. **Sustainable Agriculture Practices:**
- Implementing environmentally friendly farming techniques, like those promoted in the Sikkim Organic Mission, can enhance long-term food security by improving soil fertility and reducing environmental degradation.
2. **Strengthening Social Security Programs:**
- Programs like the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) should be continuously strengthened to provide sufficient and nutritious food to vulnerable populations, especially in rural areas.
3. **Targeted Nutrition-Specific Interventions:**
- Initiatives like Poshan Abhiyaan and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) should focus on addressing child wasting and stunting. For example, the "Take-Home Ration" program provides nutrient-rich food packages to pregnant and lactating women.
4. **Technological Reforms in PDS:**

- States should adopt technology-driven reforms like Rajasthan's Bhamashah Yojana, which uses biometric authentication to ensure that only eligible beneficiaries receive food subsidies, reducing corruption and improving efficiency.

5. **Promotion of Climate-Resilient Crops:**

- Encouraging the cultivation of drought-resistant

crops can mitigate the impact of climate change on food production and ensure food availability even in adverse weather conditions.

6. **International Collaboration:**

- India can benefit from partnerships with international organizations like the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF to leverage global expertise and resources in combating hunger during crises.

Government initiatives:

1. National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013
2. Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)
3. Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)
4. Poshan Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission)
5. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)
6. PM Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan
7. Eat Right India Movement
8. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)
9. Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)
10. Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN)
11. One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)

India's **GHI 2024 ranking** highlights ongoing hunger and food insecurity challenges, despite several government initiatives. A **multifaceted approach**—including sustainable agricultural practices, targeted nutrition programs, technology-driven reforms, and climate-resilient solutions—is crucial to ensuring food security. Achieving this is vital for meeting **SDG 2**, which aims to eliminate hunger by **2030**.