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Global Hunger Index, 2018

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Recently the 2018 Global Hunger Index (GHI) has been released which is a peer-reviewed annual publication by **Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide** (The International Food Policy Research Institute was also involved with the publication until 2018) .

- The Report shows that the world has made gradual progress in reducing overall hunger, but this progress has been uneven. Areas of severe hunger and undernutrition stubbornly persist, reflecting human misery for millions.
- India ranked 103 out of 119 countries in the GHI 2018 which dropped 3 places as compared to 100 out of 119 in 2017.

Global Hunger Index

- The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at global, regional, and national levels.
- The GHI is designed to raise awareness and understanding of the struggle against hunger, provide a way to compare levels of hunger between countries and regions, and call attention to those areas of the world where hunger levels are highest and where the need for additional efforts to eliminate hunger is greatest.
- GHI is calculated each year to assess progress and setbacks in combating hunger. It scores on a 100-point GHI Severity Scale, where 0 is the best score (no hunger) and 100 is the chronic undernutrition.

- **Indicators for Calculating GHI Score:**

- **UNDERNOURISHMENT:** the share of the population that is undernourished (caloric intake is insufficient);
- **CHILD WASTING:** the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition);
- **CHILD STUNTING:** the share of children under the age of five who are stunted (low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition); and
- **CHILD MORTALITY:** the mortality rate of children under the age of five (reflection of the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments).

Key Findings

- Worldwide, the level of hunger and undernutrition falls into the serious category (with a GHI score of 20.9). However, there is a decline of 28% from the score of 29.2 in 2000.
- Achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 will remain a challenge which aims to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture, by 2030.
- If progress in reducing hunger and undernutrition continues on its current trajectory, an estimated 50 countries will fail to achieve low hunger by 2030.
- Hunger varies enormously by region as GHI scores reflect serious levels of hunger in South Asia and Africa in comparison to other regions which have low or moderate hunger levels.
- In both South Asia and Africa south of the Sahara, the rates of undernourishment, child stunting, child wasting, and child mortality are very high.
- Conflict and poor climatic conditions both separately and together have worsened undernourishment in these regions.
- Conflict has also compromised children's nutritional status, and the impact of conflict on child mortality is starkly evident. For eg. the 10 countries with the world's highest under-five mortality rates are all in Africa south of the Sahara, and 7 of these are considered fragile states.
- Hunger may be both a cause and a consequence of forced migration, for about 70 million displaced people, including internally displaced people, refugees, and asylum seekers.
- India's hunger level is categorised as "serious". Its score is 31.1, which is 7.7 points lesser than in 2000, but higher than the global average of 20.9 (higher the score, worse the situation).
- At least one in five Indian children under the age of five are 'wasted'.
- India has shown improvement in three of the indicators (undernourishment, mortality and stunting) over the comparable reference years.

- However, the prevalence of child wasting has worsened in comparison to previous reference years which is associated with a low maternal body mass index, suggesting the need for a focus on the nutritional status of the mother during pregnancy.
- Further, wasting rates are highest for infants aged 0 to 5 months, suggesting that attention to birth outcomes and breastfeeding is important.

Policy Recommendations

- Resources and attention should be focussed on the regions of the world where the majority of displaced people are located: low- and middle-income countries and the least-developed countries. Displaced people and host communities in these countries should receive strong, sustained support from governments and international organizations.
- UN Resolution 2417 (2018) should be followed, which focuses on the links between armed conflict, conflict-induced food insecurity, and the threat of famine. A robust monitoring, reporting, and accountability mechanism for addressing violations should be introduced.
- Actions should be prioritized to address the special vulnerabilities and challenges of women and girls to ensure their access to assets, services, productive and financial resources, and income-generating opportunities.
- Investment should be scaled up and governance should be improved to accelerate development in rural areas, where large numbers of displaced people originate and where hunger is often greatest.
- Support should be provided for people's efforts to diversify their livelihoods and secure access to land, markets, and services.
- Sustainable agricultural practices should be promoted that will increase households' resilience and enhance domestic food supplies.