



State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World

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Why in News

A report titled 'The State of Food Security Nutrition in the World 2021 (SOFI)' has studied the impact of Covid-19 pandemic-induced income loss on food intake and malnutrition.

- The report is presented by the **Food and Agriculture Organization** of the United Nations, the **International Fund for Agricultural Development**, the **United Nations Children's Fund**, the **World Food Programme** and the **World Health Organization**.
- Earlier, the **Global Food Policy Report 2021** (released by the **International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)**) stated that the impacts of rising poverty and reduced livelihoods are reflected clearly in rising levels of food insecurity and decreasing diet quality.

Key Points

- **Impact on Developing & Underdeveloped World:** The biggest impact of Covid-19 on food security has been on almost all low-and middle-income countries.
 - Moreover, those countries where there were climate-related disasters or conflict or both along with economic downturns as a consequence of the pandemic containment measure, suffered the most.
 - **More than half of the world's undernourished are found in Asia** (418 million) and more than **one-third in Africa** (282 million).
 - Compared with 2019, about 46 million more people in Africa, 57 million more in Asia, and about 14 million more in Latin America and the Caribbean were affected by hunger in 2020.

- **Likely to Miss SDG Targets:** Globally, the world is **not on track** to achieve **sustainable development goals** (eliminating poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2)) targets for any of the nutrition indicators by 2030.
 - This can be reflected in the finding that, after remaining virtually unchanged for five years, the **prevalence of undernourishment (PoU)** increased 1.5 percentage points in just one year.
 - Efforts to eradicate malnutrition in all its forms have been challenged by **disruptions in essential nutrition interventions and negative impacts on dietary patterns** during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Problems in Access to Healthy Food:** Around 11.8 crore more people faced hunger in 2020 than in 2019, an increase of 18%.
 - There has been a significant **dip in people's affordability for healthy food** due to a loss in income.
 - Nearly **one in three people in the world** (nearly 3 billion) did not have access to adequate food in 2020.
 - **External (e.g. conflicts or climate shocks) and internal (e.g. low productivity and inefficient food supply chains)** factors affecting food systems are pushing up the cost of nutritious foods which, combined with low incomes, are increasing the unaffordability of healthy diets.
- **Gender Disparity:** There is a gap in access to food among men and women.
 - For every **10 food-insecure men, there were 11 food-insecure women in 2020**, up from 10.6 in 2019.
 - Nearly **a third of the world's women of reproductive age** suffer from **anaemia**.

Indian Scenario

Status of Malnutrition:

- The **prevalence of undernutrition among the total population in India was 15.3%** during 2018-20. This is **significantly low when compared to the global 8.9%** during the same period.

This is **an improvement from the 21.6%** during 2004-06.
- In the year 2020, **about 17.3% of children under the age of five years suffered a wasted growth with low weight for height**, the highest among countries.

About 31% of children have low height for age (stunted) which is an improvement from 41.7% in 2012 but is still higher than many other countries in the world.
- The country has observed **an increase in the prevalence of obesity** among the adult population from 3.% in 2012 to 3.9% in 2016.
- The **prevalence of anaemia among women of reproductive age has only marginally improved** from 53.2% in 2012 to 53% in 2019.

Way Forward

The report has **laid down the following six ways** through which food systems could be transformed to address the major drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition and ensure access to affordable healthy diets for all, sustainably and inclusively.

- **Integrate humanitarian, development and peacebuilding policies in conflict areas** – for example, through social protection measures to prevent families from selling meagre assets in exchange for food.
- **Scale-up climate resilience across food systems** – for example, by offering smallholder farmers wide access to climate risk insurance and forecast-based financing.
- **Strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable to economic adversity** – for example, through in-kind or cash support programmes to lessen the impact of pandemic-style shocks or food price volatility.
- **Intervene along supply chains to lower the cost of nutritious foods** – for example, by encouraging the planting of biofortified crops or making it easier for fruit and vegetable growers to access markets.
- **Tackle poverty and structural inequalities** – for example, by boosting food value chains in poor communities through technology transfers and certification programmes.
- **Strengthen food environments and change consumer behaviour** – for example, by eliminating industrial trans fats and reducing the salt and sugar content in the food supply or protecting children from the negative impact of food marketing.

Source: DTE