



State of Food Insecurity in 2022

For Prelims: Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2022, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Food Fortification, Micronutrient Deficiency, Mid-day Meal, Public Distribution System.

For Mains: Global Hunger Index (GHI), Factors Responsible for Hunger and Malnutrition in India, Recent Government Initiatives to Tackle Hunger.

Why in News?

Hunger has remained grisly in several parts of the world including India in 2022, so much so that the **United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)** called 2022 **'The year of Unprecedented Hunger'**.

- According to the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, about 307 crore people worldwide could not afford a healthy diet in 2020. India is home to almost a third of this global population.

What are the Highlights from Various Reports?

- **World Food Programme:**
 - The number of people facing acute food insecurity has **almost tripled since 2019 and as many as 828 million people go to bed hungry every night**, according to **WFP (World Food Programme)**.
 - Food security shot past pre-pandemic levels, especially in war-torn places and those wrecked by climate disasters.
- **The Future of Food and Agriculture by FAO:**
 - According to FAO's report **Future of Food and Agriculture – Drivers and triggers for transformation**, the world will witness persistent **food insecurity** if agrifood systems remain the same.
 - The world will witness persistent food insecurity, degrading resources and unsustainable economic growth in the future if agrifood systems remain the same.
 - The world was **"tremendously off track" to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**, including agrifood targets.
 - By 2050, there will be 10 billion people in the world to feed and this will be an unprecedented challenge if significant attempts are not made to reverse current trends.
- **Global Hunger Index (GHI):**
 - India ranked an abysmal 107 out of 121 countries on the **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2022**.
 - Among the South Asian countries, India (107) is ranked below Sri Lanka (64), Nepal (81), Bangladesh (84), and Pakistan (99).
 - **Globally, the progress against hunger has largely stagnated** in recent years, with a global score of 18.2 in 2022 as compared to 19.1 in 2014, there is only a slight improvement. However, the **2022 GHI score is still considered "moderate"**.
- **State Food Security Index (SFSI) by FSSAI:**
 - **Tamil Nadu scored the highest among major states** on all indicators, followed by **Gujarat and Maharashtra**.

- **Tamil Nadu scored a total of 82.5 points** on a scale of 100 where the indicators included human resource and institutional data, compliance, food testing infrastructure and surveillance, training and capacity building and lastly, consumer empowerment.
- **Among Union Territories (UT), Jammu and Kashmir topped** the list, performing better than the national capital with a score of 68.5, followed by National Capital Territory of Delhi (66) and Chandigarh (58).
- **Promises and Reality Report:**
 - More than 90 million eligible people have been **excluded from legal entitlements under the Targeted [Public Distribution System \(TPDS\)](#)**, India's tool to combat food insecurity.
 - The Census of India 2011 remains the source of data for arriving at the number of people to be covered by the scheme. As a consequence, **subsequent years have seen the exclusion of a large chunk of the population.**
 - This in-built fallacy in the legal framework led to exclusion of at least 12% of the population from the legal entitlements in the most legitimized way.

What are the Suggestions given by the Various Reports?

- **Systemic Policy Changes:**
 - Systemic policy changes and global concerted efforts are **necessary to alleviate the condition of these people and meet the UN-mandated Sustainable Development Goal of 'Zero Hunger' by 2030.**
- **Sustainable Agricultural Systems:**
 - With the rapid growth of the human population, our demand for food has also risen.
 - Agricultural systems **will need to produce more food in a sustainable manner in the future to cope with this.**
- **Population Decline of Insects:**
 - Without an abundance of insect pollinators, humans face the mind-boggling challenge of growing food and other agricultural products at scale.
 - Insects are **important because of their diversity, ecological role and influence on [agriculture](#)**, human health and natural resources.
 - They create the biological foundation for all terrestrial ecosystems, further, they cycle nutrients, pollinate plants, disperse seeds, maintain soil structure and fertility, control populations of other organisms and provide a major food source for other taxa.
- **Think Beyond Short Term Needs:**
 - Decision makers need to think beyond short-term needs. A lack of vision, piecemeal approaches and **quick fixes will come at a high cost for everyone**
 - There is an urgent need to change **course so that a more sustainable and resilient future for agrifood systems** is created.
- **Viewing Nutrition Through Different Lenses:**
 - Better nutrition involves more than just food, it includes health, water, sanitation, gender perspectives, and social norms. Therefore, **there is a need to look forward to comprehensive policy to fill the nutritional gap.**
- **Bringing Social Audit Mechanism:**
 - States and Union Territories **should compulsorily carry out the social audit of the mid-day meal scheme in every district**, with the help of local authorities and simultaneously work on nutritional awareness.
 - Use of **[information technology](#)** to improve program monitoring can be thought of too.
- **Re-orienting PDS:**
 - There is a need to be re-orient and an up-scale **[Public Distribution System](#)** to make it more transparent and reliable and ensure availability, accessibility and **affordability of nutritious food, also making a positive impact on the purchasing power of the lower socio-economic** segment of the population
- **Women-led SDG Mission:**
 - There is a need to redesign existing direct nutrition programs and linking it with **[women's self-help groups](#) can make India realise the [Sustainable Development Goal- 2](#)** to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030.
- **Reducing Waste, Reducing Hunger:**

- India wastes about 7% of its total annual food production and almost 30% of the fruits and vegetables **because of inadequate warehousing facilities and cold storages.**
- According to the [International Institute of Refrigeration](#), if developing countries had the same level of refrigeration infrastructure as developed countries, they would save 200 million tonnes of food or around 14% of their food supply, which can help in tackling hunger and malnutrition.

What are India's Initiatives to Eradicate Hunger/Malnutrition?

- [Eat Right India Movement](#)
- [POSHAN Abhiyan](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana](#)
- [Food Fortification](#)
- [National Food Security Act, 2013](#)
- [Mission Indradhanush](#)
- [Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\) Scheme](#)
- [Amendments in the Essential Commodities Act, 1955](#)
- [Make India Trans Fat free.](#)
- [International Year of Millets.](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana \(PMGKAY\).](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. With reference to the provisions made under the National Food Security Act, 2013, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The families coming under the category of 'below poverty line (BPL)' only are eligible to receive subsidised food grains.
2. The eldest woman in a household, of age 18 years or above, shall be the head of the household for the purpose of issuance of a ration card.
3. Pregnant women and lactating mothers are entitled to a 'take-home ration' of 1600 calories per day during pregnancy and for six months thereafter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- Issue of food security has been addressed by the Government through the Public Distribution System and the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The National Food Security Act (NFSA) enacted on July 5, 2013 marked a shift in the approach to food security from welfare to rights based approach.
- Salient features of National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013
 - Upto 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population will be covered under TPDS with uniform entitlement of 5 kg per person per month.
 - Pregnant women, lactating mothers and children in the age group of 6 months to 14 years will be entitled to meals as per prescribed nutritional norms under Integrated Child

Development Services (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Schemes. Higher nutritional norms have been prescribed for malnourished children upto 6 years of age.

- Pregnant women and lactating mothers will also be entitled to receive maternity benefit of not less than ₹6,000.
- Prior to implementation of the NFSA, there were mainly three types of ration cards issued by State Governments such as Above Poverty Line (APL), Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya (AAY) ration cards distinguished by different colours opted by the concerned states Government. According to NFSA 2013, APL and BPL groups have been re-classified into two categories - Non-Priority and Priority. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- Eldest woman of the household of age 18 years or above is to be the head of the household for the purpose of issuing of ration cards. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers are entitled to food supplement of 600 calories of energy and 18-20 gms of protein per day in the form of Micronutrient Fortified Food and/or energy dense food as take away home ration. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.

▪ **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q.1 In what way could replacement of price subsidy with Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) change the scenario of subsidies in India? Discuss. **(2015)**

Q.2 What are the salient features of the National Food Security Act, 2013? How has the Food Security Bill helped in eliminating hunger and malnutrition in India? **(2021)**

Q.3 What are the major challenges of Public Distribution System (PDS) in India? How can it be made effective and transparent? **(2022)**

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