



Child Wasting in India

For Prelims: India's Child Wasting, [UNICEF](#), [WHO](#), [World Bank](#), [Malnutrition](#), [WHA](#), [SDG](#).

For Mains: India's Child Wasting.

Why in News?

Recently, [UNICEF \(United Nations Children's Fund\)](#), [WHO \(World Health Organization\)](#), [World Bank Group](#) have released a report titled- "**Levels and trends in child malnutrition: Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates (JME)**", stating that in 2020, 18.7 % of Indian children were affected by [Wasting caused by poor nutrient intake](#).

What are Joint Malnutrition Estimates (JME)?

- The JME group was created in **2011** to address the call for harmonized child [Malnutrition estimates](#).
- The inter-agency team releases **annual estimates for child stunting, overweight, underweight**, wasting and severe wasting.
- Child malnutrition estimates for the indicators stunting, wasting, overweight and underweight describe the magnitude and patterns of under- and overnutrition.
 - The UNICEF-WHO-WB Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates inter-agency group updates regularly the global and regional estimates in prevalence and numbers for each indicator.
- The key findings in the 2023 Edition include **global and regional trends for all mentioned indicators** as well as country-level modelled estimates for stunting and overweight.

What are the Findings of the Report?

- **Wasting:**
 - Half of all children with wasting in the world live in India.
 - In 2022, an estimated 45 million children under five (6.8 %) were affected by wasting globally, of which 13.6 million were suffering from severe wasting.
 - More than three quarters of all children with severe wasting live in Asia and another 22 % live in Africa.
- **Stunting:**
 - India had a stunting rate of 31.7 % in 2022, down from 41.6 % in 2012, a decade ago.
 - Some 148.1 million of children under age five worldwide, were affected by stunting in 2022.
 - Nearly all children affected lived in Asia (52 % of the global share) and Africa.
- **Overweight:**
 - There are 37 million children under five who **are overweight globally**, an increase of nearly four million since 2000.
 - India had an overweight percentage of 2.8 % in 2022, compared to 2.2 % in 2012.
- **Progress:**
 - There is insufficient progress to reach the **2025 [World Health Assembly \(WHA\)](#) global**

nutrition targets and UN-mandated [Sustainable Development Goal target 2.2](#).

• **WHA global Nutrition Targets are:**

- Reduce stunting by 40% in children under 5
 - Reduce the prevalence of anaemia by 50% among women in the age group of 19-49 years
 - Ensure 30% reduction in low-birthweight
 - Ensure no increase in childhood overweight;
 - Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months up to at least 50%
 - Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%.
- Only about a third of all countries are 'on track' to halve the number of children affected by stunting by 2030 and assessment of progress to date not being **possible for about one quarter of countries**.
 - Even fewer countries are expected to achieve the 2030 target of 3% prevalence for overweight, with just one in six countries currently 'on track'.
 - An assessment of progress towards the wasting target is not possible for nearly half of countries.

What are the Recommendations?

- Children suffering from severe wasting require **early detection and timely treatment** and care to survive.
- More intensive efforts are **required if the world is to achieve the global target** of reducing the number of children with stunting to 89 million by 2030.
- Gaps in the available data in some regions make it challenging to accurately assess progress towards global targets. Regular data collection is therefore critical to monitor and analyze country, regional and global progress on child malnutrition moving forward.

What is Malnutrition?

▪ **About:**

- Malnutrition refers to **deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in a person's intake** of energy and/or nutrients.
- The term malnutrition covers two broad groups of conditions.
 - One is 'Undernutrition'—which includes stunting (low height for age), wasting (low weight for height), underweight (low weight for age) and micronutrient deficiencies or insufficiencies (a lack of important vitamins and minerals).
 - The other is **Overweight**, obesity and diet-related [noncommunicable diseases \(such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer\)](#).
 - Childhood overweight occurs when children's calorie intake from food and beverages exceeds their energy requirements.

▪ **Indian Initiatives Related to Malnutrition:**

- [Mid-day Meal \(MDM\) scheme](#)
- [POSHAN Abhiyaan](#)
- [The National Food Security Act \(NFSA\), 2013](#).
- [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana \(PMMVY\)](#)
- [Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\) Scheme](#)
- [Aspirational District Programme](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q. How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack of availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India? (250 words)

Source: DTE

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