



News Analysis (12 Sep, 2018)

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Global Hunger Continues to Rise

According to the **United Nations' State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report 2018**, climate change is having a negative effect on global agriculture and is driving up the number of hungry people around the world.

- The report was jointly published by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO).
- The report is part of tracking progress towards **Sustainable Development Goal 2- Zero Hunger**, which aims to end hunger, promote food security and end all forms of malnutrition by 2030.
- The 2017 report observed **conflict, climate and economic slowdowns** are the factors behind the recent rise in hunger. It also provided an in-depth study of the role of conflicts.
- The 2018 report focuses on the role of climate variability and extremes to explain the observed trends in food security.

Key Findings

- About 800 million people, one in every nine, were malnourished in 2017, putting at risk the UN's goal of eradicating hunger in the world by 2030.
- Evidence continues to signal a rise in world hunger. According to available data, the number of people who suffer from hunger has been growing over the past three years, returning to levels from a decade ago.
- There was also limited progress in 2017 in addressing multiple forms of malnutrition, such as child stunting (in which children don't grow properly due to undernourishment) and adult obesity, putting the health of hundreds of millions of people at risk.

- The situation is worsening in South America and most regions of Africa, while the trend in undernourishment in Asia seems to be slowing significantly.
- The effects of climate variability on rainfall patterns and agricultural seasons, and climate extremes such as droughts and floods, are among the key drivers of the rise in hunger, together with **conflict and economic slowdowns in nations such as Yemen and economic crises in countries like Venezuela** which have restricted people's access to food.
- Changes in climate are undermining production of major crops such as wheat, rice and maize in tropical and temperate regions, a trend that is expected to worsen as temperatures become more extreme.
- The number of undernourished people tends to be higher in countries highly exposed to climate extremes.
- The late or early start of rainy seasons and the unequal distribution of rainfall within a season are affecting food production. Other effects include food price hikes and losses in poor farmers' incomes.
- Globally, Africa and Asia accounted for about 40% and 55% of all stunted children, respectively. Africa has seen an upward trend in the number of stunted children, while Asia has experienced the largest relative decrease in stunting prevalence.
- Children with low weight-for-height (wasting) have an increased risk of mortality.
- While the prevalence of overweight in children under five years may not have changed significantly in recent years, adult obesity continues to rise and one in three women of reproductive age in the world is anaemic.
- Adult obesity is worsening, and more than one in eight adults in the world is obese. The problem is most significant in North America, but Africa and Asia are also experiencing an upward trend.
- Poor access to food and particularly healthy food contributes to undernutrition as well as overweight and obesity. It increases the risk of low birthweight, childhood stunting and anaemia in women of reproductive age, and it is linked to overweight in school-age girls and obesity among women, particularly in upper-middle- and high-income countries.
- The report launches an urgent appeal to accelerate and scale up actions to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of changing climate variability and increasing extremes.

Recommendations in Report

- Policies must pay special attention to groups who are the most vulnerable to the harmful consequences of poor food access: infants, children aged under five, school-aged children, adolescent girls, and women.
- A sustainable shift must be made towards nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems that can provide safe and high-quality food for all.

- Stepping-up of efforts to build climate resilience through policies that promote climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction.
 - Ensure better integration of the global policy platforms like climate change (governed by the UNFCCC and the 2015 Paris Agreement), disaster risk reduction (the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction), development (as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) etc and processes to ensure that actions across and within sectors such as environment, food, agriculture and health pursue coherent objectives.
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HIV/AIDS Act, 2017 Implemented

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued a notification for bringing the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017 in force from 10th September 2018.

HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017

Role of the central and state governments

By this act, the central and state governments shall take measures to:

- prevent the spread of HIV or AIDS.
- provide anti-retroviral therapy (ART) for persons with HIV or AIDS.
- facilitate HIV affected person access to welfare schemes especially for women and children.
- formulate HIV or AIDS education communication programmes that are age appropriate, gender-sensitive and non-stigmatizing.
- lay guidelines for the care and treatment of children with HIV or AIDS.
- provide HIV prevention, testing, treatment, and counseling services for every person in the care and custody of the state.

Prohibits discrimination Against HIV positive person and Family Members

The Act lists various grounds on which discrimination against HIV positive persons and those living with them is prohibited.

These include the denial, termination, discontinuation or unfair treatment with regard to:

- employment.
- educational establishments.
- health care services.
- residing or renting property.
- standing for public or private office.
- provision of insurance.
- Every HIV infected or affected person below the age of 18 years has the right to reside in a shared household and enjoy the facilities of the household.

Informed consent and disclosure of HIV status

- The Bill requires that no HIV test, medical treatment, or research will be conducted on a person without his informed consent.
- No person shall be compelled to disclose his HIV status except with his informed consent, and if required by a court order.
- Informed consent for an HIV test will not be required in case of screening by any licensed blood bank, a court order, medical research, and epidemiological purposes where the HIV test is anonymous and not meant to determine the HIV status of a person.
- Establishments keeping records of information of HIV positive persons shall adopt data protection measures. The requirement for HIV testing as a pre-requisite for obtaining employment or accessing health care or education is also prohibited.

Appointment of the Ombudsman

- An ombudsman will be appointed by each state government to inquire into complaints related to the violation of the Act and the provision of health care services.
- The Ombudsman shall submit a report to the state government every six months stating the number and nature of complaints received, the actions taken and orders passed.

Guardianship

- A person between the age of 12 to 18 years who has sufficient maturity in understanding and managing the affairs of his HIV or AIDS-affected family shall be competent to act as a guardian of another sibling below 18 years of age.
- The guardianship will be applied in matters relating to admission to educational establishments, operating bank accounts, managing property, care and treatment, amongst others.

Court proceedings

- Cases relating to HIV positive persons shall be disposed of by the court on a priority basis.
- In any legal proceeding, if an HIV infected or affected person is a party, the court may pass orders that the proceedings be conducted (a) by suppressing the identity of the person, (b) in camera, and (c) to restrain any person from publishing information that discloses the identity of the applicant.
- When passing any order with regard to a maintenance application filed by an HIV infected or affected person, the court shall take into account the medical expenses incurred by the applicant.

Punishment on violation of Act

Violation of the Act by the publication of information about people living with HIV or advocating hatred against them will attract imprisonment ranging from three months to two years or a maximum fine of Rs. 1 lakh.

Way Forward

- Implementation of the act is a step in the right direction with regard to the rights of the person affected by HIV and to prevent discrimination against the person living with HIV and their family members. By the provisions of this act, Anti-retroviral Therapy treatment is now a legal right for the person affected with HIV/AIDS.
- However, the provisions of this act only protect infected individuals from prejudiced behavior and attitudes. Communities that are vulnerable to infection, individuals who are yet to be tested and kin of those infected are still subjected to stigma and discrimination. Thus, the need is to adopt a holistic approach to successfully combat discrimination against the infected and the vulnerable, and create safe spaces for them.
- Enforcement of this act in spirit is need of the hour with the legalization of homosexual relationships. LGBTQ are more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. With the Supreme Court striking down section 377 and the HIV and AIDS Act also coming in force, the social stigma on the LGBTQ community will gradually go away. They will have more rights and more people will come forward for medical treatment with ease.

According to UNAIDS, in 2016, India had 80,000 new HIV infections and 62,000 AIDS-related deaths. There were 2.1 million people living with HIV in 2016 of whom only 49% were accessing antiretroviral therapy.

The UNAIDS data also shows that men who have sex with men had an HIV prevalence of 4.3%, while HIV prevalence among transgender people was 7.2%.

LGBTQ stands for Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer.

Important Facts for Prelims (12th September 2018)

APSARA U Reactor

“Apsara-Upgraded” is a swimming pool type research reactor which began its operation at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre(BARC), Trombay on September 10, 2018. Indigenously made, it uses plate type dispersion fuel elements made of Low Enriched Uranium (LEU).

- **Significance of Reactor**

The reactor will increase indigenous production of radioisotopes for medical application. It will be used for research in nuclear physics, material science and radiation shielding.

- **Apsara Reactor:**

“Apsara” was also the name of the first research reactor in Asia which became operational in Trombay campus of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre in August 1956. After five decades of operation, the research reactor was shut down in 2009. Now, it is recommissioned as APSARA U after upgradation.

- **Swimming Pool-Type Reactor**

It is a common form of the water-cooled, plate-fuel reactor, in which the reactor core is positioned near the bottom of a large, deep pool of water.

India's First Missile Tracking Ship

- India's first Missile Tracking Ship (a kind ocean surveillance ship) has been built by **Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL)**. The ship is being built for the National Technical Research Organisation, the technical intelligence agency working directly under the supervision of the Prime Minister's Office and the National Security Adviser.
- **India will now be among the few countries to operate a ship such as this.** It will be inducted in the Indian Navy once sea trials are completed.
- Other Countries that have a missile tracking ship are **Russia, US, China, and France.**
- It will be named after its induction into the Indian Navy. For now, it is simply called as VC 11184.
- A tracking ship also called a missile range instrumentation ship or range ship is a ship equipped with antennas and electronics to support the launching and tracking of missiles and rockets.

Yudh Abhyas 2018

- Yudh Abhyas 2018 is a joint military training exercise between the **Indian Army and US Army.**
- **Yudh Abhyas is hosted alternately by both countries annually.**

- This year's exercise will be conducted in the foothills of Himalayas at Chaubatia in Uttarakhand from 16 September to 29 September 2018. This will be the 14th edition of the joint military exercise.
- In this year's exercise, both nations will work together in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism environment in mountainous terrain.

International Center for Transformative Artificial Intelligence (ICTAI)

- **NITI Aayog, Intel, and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR)** will together set up a Model International Center for Transformative Artificial Intelligence (ICTAI) towards developing and deploying AI-led application-based research projects.
 - This initiative is part of NITI Aayog's 'National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence' discussion paper that focuses on establishing ICTAI in the country through private sector collaboration. The model ICTAI is chartered to develop AI foundational frameworks, tools, and assets, including curated datasets and unique AI algorithms.
 - Based in **Bengaluru**, the Model ICTAI aims to conduct advanced research to incubate AI-led solutions in three important areas – **healthcare, agriculture, and smart mobility** – by bringing together the expertise of Intel (private) and TIFR (public).
 - The intent is to develop standards and support policy development related to information technology such as data storage, information security, privacy, and ethics for data capture and use.
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