



Global Hunger Index 2023

For Prelims: [Global Hunger Index](#), [Eat Right India Movement](#), [POSHAN Abhiyan](#)(National Nutrition Mission), [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana](#), [National Food Security Act, 2013](#), [Mission Indradhanush](#), [Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\) Scheme](#)

For Mains: Issues Related to Poverty & Hunger in India.

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

In the [Global Hunger Index](#) 2023, India ranked **111th out of 125 countries**, indicating a serious level of hunger.

- Neighboring countries, such as **Pakistan (102nd)**, **Bangladesh (81st)**, **Nepal (69th)**, and **Sri Lanka (60th)**, scored better than India.

What is the Global Hunger Index ?

- **About:**
 - The **Global Hunger Index (GHI)** is a peer-reviewed report, published on an annual basis by **Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe**.
 - The GHI is a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at **global, regional, and national levels**, reflecting multiple dimensions of hunger over time.
 - The GHI score is calculated on a 100-point scale reflecting the severity of hunger - **0 is the best score (implies no hunger) and 100 is the worst**.

Note: **Concern Worldwide** is an **international humanitarian organization** dedicated to tackling poverty and suffering in the world's poorest countries.

- Welthungerhilfe is a **private aid organization in Germany**. It was established in **1962**, as the German section of the "**Freedom from Hunger Campaign**".
- **Calculation:**
 - Each country's GHI score is calculated based on a formula that combines **four indicators** that together capture the **multidimensional nature of hunger**:
 - **Undernourishment:** The share of the population whose caloric intake is insufficient;
 - **Child Stunting:** The share of children under the age of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition;
 - **Child Wasting:** The share of children under the age of five who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition; and
 - **Child Mortality:** The share of children who die before their fifth birthday, reflecting in part the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments.
- **Alignment with [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](#):**

- The prevalence of undernourishment is an indicator for **SDG 2.1**, focusing on ensuring access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food for all.
- Child stunting and wasting rates are **indicators for SDG 2.2**, aiming to end all forms of malnutrition.
- Reducing preventable child deaths is an **SDG 3.2 goal**.

What are the Key Takeaways from GHI 2023?

▪ India's GHI Score:

◦ Score Analysis:

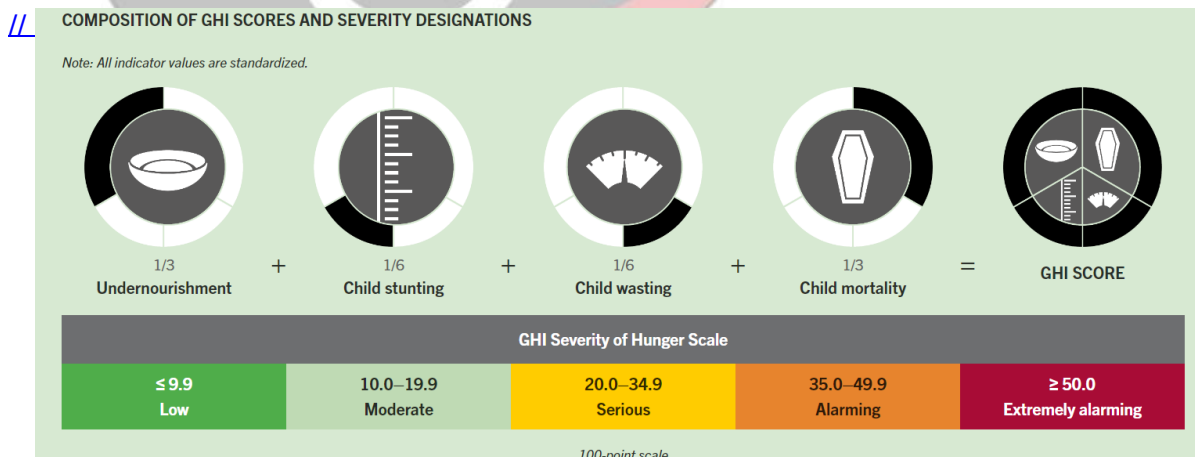
- India's GHI score 2023 stands at **28.7**, categorized as **"serious" on the GHI Severity of Hunger Scale**.
 - This shows a slight improvement from its GHI 2015 score of **29.2**, which was also deemed serious.
- Also, compared to its alarming GHI scores of 38.4 in 2000 and 35.5 in 2008, India has made significant progress.

◦ Related Data and References:

- Child stunting is prevalent at 35.5% (India's [National Family Health Survey\(NFHS\) 2019-2021](#))
- The prevalence of undernourishment in India is **16.6%** (State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report 2023)
- India's child wasting rate is a concerning **18.7%** (India's NFHS 2019-21), the highest among all countries in the report.
- The under-five mortality rate stands at **3.1%** (United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation January 2023)

▪ Global Hunger Trends:

- According to the GHI 2023 report, **Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Chile, China** are among the top ranked countries (i.e., low level of hunger) and **Yemen, Madagascar, Central African Republic** are the bottom.
- The **GHI 2023 score for the world is 18.3**, considered **moderate**, showing minimal improvement since 2015.
 - The prevalence of **undernourishment** has risen from 572 million to approximately **735 million people since 2017**.
- The GHI attributed the stagnation to various crises, including [climate change](#), **conflicts**, **economic shocks**, [the Covid-19 pandemic](#), and [the Russia-Ukraine war](#).
 - These crises have exacerbated social and economic inequalities and hindered progress in reducing hunger worldwide.



What is the Indian Government's Response to GHI Report 2023?

- **Criticism of Methodology:** The **Ministry of Women and Child Development** has raised concerns about the report's methodology, suggesting "**serious methodological issues**" and "**malafide intent.**"
 - Data from the government's Poshan Tracker consistently shows **child wasting prevalence below 7.2%**, which contradicts the GHI's reported figure of **18.7%**.
- **Focus on Child Health:** The government noted that **three out of the four GHI indicators pertain to children's health** and may not provide a complete representation of the entire population.
- **Small Sample Size:** The government expressed doubts about the accuracy of the "**Proportion of Undernourished Population**" indicator, as it is based on a **small sample size opinion poll.**
- **Complex Factors:** The government's argument is that indicators like **stunting and wasting are outcomes of various complex factors**, including **sanitation, genetics, environment**, and food utilization, and are not **solely attributable to hunger.**
 - The government also pointed out that **child mortality may not solely be an outcome of hunger**, indicating that other factors are at play.

What are the Other Terms Related to Hunger?

| Term | Definition |
|-------------------------|---|
| Undernourishment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It refers to Insufficient calorie intake to sustain a healthy life, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. ▪ It is based on individual needs in terms of age, sex, stature, and physical activity. |
| Undernutrition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It extends beyond calories and encompasses deficiencies in energy, protein, and essential vitamins and minerals. ▪ Undernutrition results from inadequate food intake in terms of both quantity and quality, poor nutrient utilization due to infections or illnesses, or a combination of these factors. |
| Famine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a distinct condition defined by the UN as occurring when specific conditions are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ when at least 20% of the population faces severe food shortages, ◦ acute child malnutrition rates exceed 30%, ◦ Two out of 10,000 people die from starvation or malnutrition-related diseases daily. |

What are the Factors Responsible for Hunger in India?

- **Socioeconomic Disparities and Poverty:** Widespread **poverty** and socioeconomic disparities are fundamental determinants of hunger in India.
 - Poverty leads to inadequate **food consumption and the inability to afford** essential nutritional and healthcare services.
- **Hidden Hunger:** India is experiencing a **severe [micronutrient deficiency](#) (also known as hidden hunger).**
 - There are several causes of this problem, including poor diet, disease, and a **failure to meet micronutrient needs during pregnancy and lactation.**
- **Inefficient Agricultural Practices and Food Distribution:** Inefficiencies in agricultural practices, including **suboptimal [crop yields](#) and post-harvest losses**, also contribute to insufficient food availability.
 - Furthermore, subsequent leakages in **food distribution and supply chain management restrict the flow of food to vulnerable populations**, resulting in food

scarcity and higher prices, which disproportionately affect the poor.

- **Gender Inequality and Nutritional Disparities:** Gender-based disparities exacerbate the problem of hunger and malnutrition in India.
 - Women and girls often experience **unequal access to food within households**, receiving smaller portions or lower-quality diets.
 - This inequity, **coupled with the demands of maternal and child care**, exposes them to higher nutritional risks, leading to chronic undernutrition.
- **Climate Change and Environmental Stressors:** India is susceptible to **climate change-related environmental stressors**, such as **changing weather patterns**, [extreme weather events](#), and **natural disasters**.
 - These factors can disrupt agricultural production, leading to crop failures and food scarcity.
- **Lack of Audit for Nutritional Programmes:** Although a number of programmes with improving nutrition as their main component are planned in the country, there is **minimal or no nutritional audit mechanism at local governance level**.

What are the Indian Government Initiatives to Address Hunger?

- [Eat Right India Movement](#)
- [POSHAN Abhiyan\(National Nutrition Mission\)](#)
- **Mid-day Meal (MDM) scheme**
- [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana](#)
- [National Food Security Act, 2013](#)
- [Mission Indradhanush](#)
- [Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\) Scheme](#)
- **PM Garib Kalyan Yojna**

Way Forward

- **Social Audit and Awareness:** Mandate social audits of the **mid-day meal scheme in all districts**, involving local authorities, alongside raising awareness on nutrition.
 - Utilize information technology for better program monitoring.
 - Establish **community-driven nutrition education programs** that raise awareness about balanced diets, food preparation, and the importance of nutrition in local languages, **particularly targeting women and children**.
- **PDS Enhancement:** Revamp the [Public Distribution System \(PDS\)](#) to enhance **transparency, reliability, and affordability** of nutritious food, benefiting the economically disadvantaged.
- **Reducing Food Waste, Reducing Hunger:** Address food wastage issues by **improving warehousing and cold storage facilities**.
 - 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.
- **Mobile Nutritional Clinics:** Implement **mobile nutritional clinics that visit remote and underserved areas** to provide health assessments, dietary counseling, and supplementary feeding for children and pregnant women.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following is/are the indicator/indicators used by IFPRI to compute the Global Hunger Index Report? (2016)

1. Undernourishment
2. Child stunting

3. Child mortality

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q: Food Security Bill is expected to eliminate hunger and malnutrition in India. Critically discuss various apprehensions in its effective implementation along with the concerns it has generated in WTO. **(2013)**

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/gobal-hunger-index-2023>

