



Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023

For Prelims: Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023, [Food and Agriculture Organisation \(FAO\)](#), [Food Insecurity](#). Undernourished people.

For Mains: Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023, Issues relating to poverty and hunger.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** of the United Nations has launched the **Asia-Pacific Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023: Statistics and Trends**, which said 74.1% of Indians were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

▪ Global:

- The prevalence of undernourishment in the Asia and the Pacific region decreased to 8.4% in 2022 from 8.8% of the previous year, equivalent to around 12 million fewer undernourished people than in 2021, but 55 million more than in 2019, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- With 370.7 million undernourished people, the Asia and the Pacific region represents **half of the world's undernourished people**.
- Southern Asia accounts for **almost 314 million of the region's undernourished people**. This represents 85 % of undernourished people in the Asia and the Pacific region.
- There are more **severely food insecure individuals in Southern Asia** than any other subregions.
- Women across the subregions, except for Eastern Asia, tend to be more food insecure than men.

▪ Indian:

- **Inability to Afford Healthy Diet:** 74.1% of Indians were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021, in 2020, the percentage was 76.2.
 - Comparison with Neighboring Countries: Pakistan had 82.2% and Bangladesh had 66.1% of their populations facing difficulties in accessing healthy food.
- **Regional Nutrition and Food Security:** 16.6% of India's population is undernourished.
 - India has **a lower prevalence of moderate or severe and severe [Food Insecurity](#)** compared to the world since 2015.
- **Children's Health:** [Stunting](#) affected 31.7% of children under five, while wasting (low weight for height) was prevalent in 18.7% of children under five.
 - The WHO global nutrition target for childhood wasting is less than 5%.
 - Stunted growth and **development are the result of poor maternal health** and nutrition, inadequate infant and young child feeding practices, and repeated infections interacting with a variety of other factors over a sustained period.
- **Women's Health:** 53% of the country's women aged between 15 to 49 had anaemia,

which was the largest prevalence rate in India in 2019.

- Anaemia impairs health and well-being in women and increases the risk for adverse maternal and neonatal outcomes.
- **Obesity and Nutrition Indicators:** 1.6% of the country's adults are obese as of 2000, according to the FAO. The figure has increased to 3.9% by 2016.
- **Exclusive Breastfeeding:** On exclusive breastfeeding among infants 0-5 months of age, India has improved the prevalence with a percentage of 63.7%, which is higher than the world prevalence - 47.7%.
 - India has the highest prevalence of **low birthweight in the region (27.4%), followed by Bangladesh and Nepal.**

What is the Food and Agriculture Organization?

▪ About:

- FAO is a specialised agency of the [United Nations](#) that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- [World Food Day](#) is celebrated every year around the world on 16th October. The day is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the founding of the FAO in 1945.
- It is one of the UN food aid organisations based in Rome (Italy). Its sister bodies are the [World Food Programme](#) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

▪ Initiatives Taken:

- [Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems \(GIAHS\)](#).
- Monitors the Desert Locust situation throughout the world.
- The [Codex Alimentarius Commission or CAC](#) is the body responsible for all matters regarding the implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.
- The [International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture](#) was adopted by the Thirty-First Session of the Conference of the FAO in 2001.

▪ Flagship Publications:

- The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA).
- The State of the World's Forests (SOFO).
- [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World \(SOFI\)](#).
- The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA).
- The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO).

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. The FAO accords the status of 'Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS)' to traditional agricultural systems. What is the overall goal of this initiative? (2016)

1. To provide modern technology, training in modern farming methods and financial support to local communities of identified GIAHS so as to greatly enhance their agricultural productivity.
2. To identify and safeguard eco-friendly traditional farm practices and their associated landscapes, agricultural biodiversity and knowledge systems of the local communities.
3. To provide Geographical Indication status to all the varieties of agricultural produce in such identified GIAHS.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (b)

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