# Global Hunger Index

## Why in news?

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2020 has placed India at rank 94 among 107 countries.

## What is the GHI?

- The GHI has been brought out every year by Welthungerhilfe (lately in partnerships with Concern Worldwide) since 2000.
- A low score gets a country a higher ranking which implies a better performance.
- The reason for mapping hunger is to ensure that the world achieves "Zero Hunger by 2030" - a Sustainable Development Goals of the UN.
- This is why GHI is not calculated for certain high-income countries.

## What are the four indicators of GHI?

- **Undernourishment** reflects the inadequate food availability.
- It is calculated by the share of the population that is undernourished (i.e., whose caloric intake is insufficient).
- **Child Wasting** reflects acute under nutrition.
- It is calculated by the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (i.e., those who have low weight for their height).
- **Child Stunting** reflects chronic under nutrition.
- It is calculated by the share of children under the age of five who are stunted (i.e., those who have low height for their age).
- **Child Mortality** reflects both inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environment.
- It is calculated by the mortality rate of children under the age of five (in part, a reflection of the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition.

## How is the score calculated?

- Each country's data are standardised on a 100-point scale.
- A final score is calculated after giving 33.33% weight each to components 1 and 4, and giving 16.66% weight each to components 2 and 3.
- As GHI tracks the performance of different countries on four key parameters,

it provides a far more comprehensive measure of hunger.

## What is India's position?

- The GHI 2020 places India at **rank 94** among 107 countries.
- The unedifying assessment of the national situation as "**serious**".
- The country's **score of 27.2** is the worst among BRICS countries.
- It is inferior to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal.

## What does this position mean?

- India's poor progress on nutritional indices must dismiss the pride surrounding strong economic growth for years.
- It turns the national focus on persisting hunger, wasting and stunting among children.

## What is the evidence?

- The evidence from the National Family Health Survey-4 (NFHS-4) of 2015-16 is not very different.
- The national policy has no appetite for a radical transformation in the delivery of adequate nutrition especially to women and children.
- It has paid inadequate attention to achieving diet diversity through the PDS.
- On the other hand, the country is widely seen as falsely equating energy calories with a diverse diet.
- The existing deprivation has been aggravated by the pandemic, with food inflation putting pressure on depleted or meagre incomes and savings.

## What did the NFHS-4 find?

- It found that under-five stunting stood at 38%, and wasting at 21%.
- These data represent some progress, at a drop of about 10 percentage points in both categories compared to a decade earlier.
- But steady economic prosperity should have yielded a far bigger social dividend.
- The latest GHI measure reminds us that much work is needed to bring the true benefits of the National Food Security Act to the unreached.
- Efforts should be made to not merely mitigate hunger through cereals, but as nourishment through a diverse diet.

## What needs to be done?

- Strengthening the PDS, with a focus on women's health, would lead to healthier pregnancies.

- Stronger supplemental nutrition under the ICDS scheme would give children a better chance at all-round development.
- International Food Policy Research Institute’s recent findings say that three out of four rural Indians cannot afford a balanced, nutritious diet.
- This underscores the importance of immediate sustained intervention.
- The right to food would be meaningless if it leaves a large section of Indians hungry, stunted and wasted.

**Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express**

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