Global Hunger Report 2022

Why in news?

India gets the credit for being the fastest growing economy. But India has ranked low in the Global Hunger Report 2022.

What are India's rankings in different reports? What is the issue?

- In the Global Hunger Report (GHR), India has been ranked 107 out of 121 with a 'serious' malnutrition score.
- But, in the Ease of Doing Business ranking (which has been withdrawn due to methodological issues), India got a big promotion to 63 in 2019.

To know more about the Global Hunger Report 2022, click here

- While the Global Hunger Report is based on a survey of 3,000 people, the Ease of Doing Business ranking had a sample of less than 100.
- Both the samples may not be representative of the true picture. So, clearly, all these methodologies have limitations.
- We need to do some introspection to address the issue of methodology.

What is the issue with GHR?

- The GHR looks at the level of malnutrition (across population) and associated height and weight of children besides infant mortality.
- A theorist would question the criteria as these variables are related to each other and hence involves **multiple counting**.
- Yet the question to be asked is whether we can do better.

What could India do?

- As a country that has made remarkable strides in growth numbers, the trickle down effects are weak.
- However, the positive aspect is that **with effective policies we can tackle the problem.**
- It has been counter-argued that the government has been spending a lot on welfare.
- The challenge is to make this money work better.

Where does the onus lie?

- The onus is really on all three levels of government (Centre, States and local) to ensure that delivery of a food package is available to all children.
- This is important because the country does have the advantage of a favourable demographic

composition.
- A prerequisite for earning any dividend from this transition is a healthy young population.
- We do have some effective templates which are already being implemented in some States.

What are the templates?

- **Mid-day meals -** States such as Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh have been running a mid-day meal scheme for children.
- The idea is to spread this scheme to all States.
- The meals must adhere to strict quality norms linked with calorie intake, where the frequency can be increased to twice a day.
- In fact, the Finance Commission may specify a proportion of the Budget to be allocated for mid-day meal schemes.
- Alternatively, if it is Centrally sponsored, it can be earmarked for this purpose.
- **PM-Kisan Scheme** - The Centre can revamp the PM-Kisan Scheme.
- Around half of the allocation to the Scheme can be set aside for promoting nutrition for children through a meal scheme.
- The panchayats can be assigned the task of providing meals in the homes of the children who do not go to school.
- **CSR** - It is mandatory for corporates to keep aside 2% of profits for CSR.
- All corporates involved in schools could be mapped to deploy the 2% of profits to specific schools in remote areas and tie up with kitchens which provide the meals.
- The government would also be helping to set up kitchens formally across the country that would cater to these requirements.

Despite the methodological shortcomings, there may be some useful takeaways from the GHR.

Reference

1. Businessline | Takeaways from global hunger report
2. Global Hunger Index | India

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