

GS SCORE

Gist of
Important
REPORTS



**Global Hunger Index
2017**

For Civil Services Exam

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GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX, 2017

The 2017 Global Hunger Index (GHI) shows long-term progress in reducing hunger in the world. The advances have been uneven, however, with millions of people still experiencing chronic hunger and many places suffering acute food crises and even famine. According to 2017 GHI scores, the level of hunger in the world has decreased by 27 percent from the 2000 level. Of the 119 countries assessed in this year's report, one falls in the extremely alarming range on the GHI Severity Scale; 7 fall in the alarming range; 44 in the serious range; and 24 in the moderate range. Only 43 countries have scores in the low range. In addition, 9 of the 13 countries that lack sufficient data for calculating 2017 GHI score -including Somalia, South Sudan, and Syria-raise significant concern, and in fact may have some of the highest levels of hunger.

To capture the multidimensional nature of hunger, GHI scores are based on four component indicators-undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality.

Hereby providing the gist of the report.

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Concepts of Hunger

The problem of hunger is complex. Thus there are different terms to describe its different forms.

Hunger is usually understood to refer to the distress associated with lack of sufficient calories. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) defines food deprivation, or undernourishment, as the consumption of too few calories to provide the minimum amount of dietary energy that each individual requires to live a healthy and productive life, given his or her sex, age, stature, and physical activity level.

Undernutrition goes beyond calories and signifies deficiencies in any or all of the following: energy, protein, or essential vitamins and minerals. Undernutrition is the result of inadequate intake of food in terms of either quantity or quality, poor utilization of nutrients due to infections or other illnesses, or a combination of these factors. These in turn are caused by a range of factors including household food insecurity; inadequate maternal health or childcare practices; or inadequate access to health services, safe water, and sanitation.

Malnutrition refers more broadly to both undernutrition (problems of deficiencies) and overnutrition (problems of unbalanced diets, such as consuming too many calories in relation to requirements with or without low intake of micronutrient-rich foods). In this report, “hunger” refers to the index based on the four component indicators. Taken together, the component indicators reflect deficiencies in calories as well as in micronutrients. Thus, the GHI reflects both aspects of hunger.

About Global Hunger Index

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional, and national levels.

The GHI is designed to raise awareness and understanding of the struggle against hunger, provide a means to compare the levels of hunger between countries and regions, and call attention to the areas of the world in greatest need of additional resources to eliminate hunger.

To capture the multidimensional nature of hunger, GHI scores are based on four indicators:

1. **UNDERNOURISHMENT:** the share of the population that is undernourished (that is, whose caloric intake is insufficient);
2. **CHILD WASTING:** the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (that is, who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition);
3. **CHILD STUNTING:** the share of children under the age of five who are stunted (that is, who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition); and
4. **CHILD MORTALITY:** the mortality rate of children under the age of five (in part, a reflection of the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments).

The indicators included in the GHI formula reflect caloric deficiencies as well as poor nutrition. By including indicators specific to children, the index captures the nutrition situation not only of the population as a whole, but also of children—a particularly vulnerable subset of the population for whom a lack of dietary energy, protein, or micronutrients (essential vitamins and minerals) leads to a high risk of illness, poor physical and cognitive development, and death. The inclusion of both child wasting and child stunting allows the GHI to capture both acute and chronic undernutrition.

GHI Calculation

GHI scores are calculated using a three-step process.

First, values for each of the four component indicators are determined from the available data for each country. The four indicators are undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality.

Second, each of the four component indicators is given a standardized score on a 100-point scale, based on the highest observed level for the indicator globally.

Third, standardized scores are aggregated to calculate the GHI score for each country, with each of the three dimensions (inadequate food supply, child mortality, and child undernutrition, which is composed equally of child stunting and child wasting) given equal weight.

This calculation results in GHI scores on a 100-point scale, where 0 is the best score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst. In practice, neither of these extremes is reached. A value of 0 would mean that a country had no undernourished people in the population, no children younger than five who were wasted or stunted, and no children who died before their fifth birthday. A value of 100 would signify that a country's undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality levels were each at approximately the highest levels observed worldwide in recent decades.

Global Data on Hunger

The 2017 Global Hunger Index (GHI) indicates that worldwide levels of hunger and undernutrition have declined over the long term: At 21.8 on a scale of 100, the average GHI score for 2017 is 27 percent lower than the 2000 score (29.9).

This improvement reflects the reductions since 2000 in each of the four GHI indicators—the prevalence of undernourishment, child stunting (low height-for-age), child wasting (low weight-for-height), and child mortality.

Despite these improvements, a number of factors, including deep and persistent inequalities, undermine efforts to end hunger and undernutrition worldwide. As a result, even as the average global hunger level has declined, certain regions of the world still struggle with hunger more than others, disadvantaged populations experience hunger more acutely than their better-off neighbors, and isolated and war-torn areas are ravaged by famine.

At the regional level, South Asia and Africa south of the Sahara have the highest 2017 GHI scores—30.9 and 29.4, respectively, indicating serious levels of hunger.

In South Asia, child undernutrition, as measured by child stunting and child wasting, is higher than in Africa south of the Sahara. Meanwhile, Africa south of the Sahara has a higher child mortality rate and struggles more with undernourishment, reflecting overall calorie deficiency for the population.

Inequality, Hunger and Malnutrition

The uneven distribution of hunger and malnutrition reflects wider inequalities of power in society. Yet power dips in and out of view in global food and nutrition policy debates. These debates tend to focus on the power of individuals (usually women) to feed families well, and on government commitment to food and nutrition security.

Analyzing the role power plays in creating nutritional inequalities means making sense of its different forms, not all of which are quantifiable, and of the multiple levels and spaces in the food system where power is at play, not all of which are obvious. Policy makers would benefit from such analyses—which can highlight gaps in thinking, areas for action, and possible allies—in formulating realistic nutrition policies and interventions. Asking questions about power in the food system can help in diagnosing its inequalities and in identifying realistic opportunities for addressing them. For instance, is it realistic to expect billions of individuals to eat healthier diets when an onslaught of advertising and a glut of attractive, affordable new food items are urging them otherwise.

Data of India

India's 2017 GHI score is at the high end of the serious category. According to 2015–2016 survey data, more than a fifth (21 percent) of children in India suffer from wasting.

India has implemented a “massive scale-up” of two national programs that address nutrition—the Integrated Child Development Services and the National Health Mission—but these have yet to achieve adequate coverage. Areas of concern include (1) the timely introduction of complementary foods for young children (that is, the transition away from exclusive breastfeeding), which declined from 52.7 percent to 42.7 percent between 2006 and 2016; (2) the share of children between 6 and 23 months old who receive an adequate diet—a mere 9.6 percent for the country; and (3) household access to improved sanitation facilities—a likely factor in child health and nutrition—which stood at 48.4 percent as of 2016.

Recommendations

Although enough food is produced globally to feed the world, hunger persists—largely the product of various and severe inequalities. Yet neither hunger nor inequality is inevitable; both are rooted in uneven power relations that often are perpetuated and exacerbated by laws, policies, attitudes, and practices.

The following recommendations aim at redressing such power imbalances in order to alleviate hunger among the most vulnerable:

- **Foster Democratic Governance of National Food Systems:** To foster genuinely democratic governance of our food system, governments must actively include in the policy-making process underrepresented groups, such as small-scale farmers, that are involved in producing food and feeding people but often excluded from contributing to the policies and laws that affect their livelihoods.
- **Broaden Participation in International Food-Policy Debates:** International bodies aiming to increase food and nutrition security must ensure the meaningful participation of people's movements and civil society organizations from all parts of the world to generate more productive debates around paradigms of food systems.
- **Guarantee Rights and Space for Civil Society:** Governments must ensure space for civil society to play its role in holding decision makers to account on their obligation to protect and ensure the Right to Food. Integral to this are freedom of assembly and association, including peaceful protest, and the right to information.
- **Protect Citizens and Ensure Standards in Business and Trade:** Governments should create and enforce regulatory frameworks to safeguard citizens—especially the most vulnerable—from the negative impacts of international trade and agriculture agreements and the actions of private firms that could endanger citizens' food sovereignty and food and nutrition security. Private companies should act in compliance with internationally agreed human rights and environmental standards in their business activities, as described in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- **Analyze Power to Make Better Policies:** National policies should take into account how hunger and malnutrition are distributed across the population, and how power inequalities affect different groups in society—for example, how discriminatory gender norms and practices can harm the nutritional status of women and girls. Focusing on trade, land, agricultural, and other policies that have both visible and hidden impacts on food and nutrition security will help to align efforts in the fight against global hunger.
- **Increase Support for Small-Scale Food Producers:** Governments should build the capacity of small-scale producers, particularly women, by ensuring access to public services such as infrastructure, financial services, information, and training.

- **Advance Equality through Education and Social Safety Nets:** To reduce gross inequality and hunger, national governments must provide access to education and create social safety nets to ensure that all members of society—including the most vulnerable and marginalized—have income security and can access essential health care.
- **Hold Governments Accountable with Timely Data:** To monitor progress toward Zero Hunger and hold governments accountable to their commitments, critical data gaps in relation to both hunger and inequality must be addressed, and national governments and international organizations must support the collection of disaggregated, independent, open, reliable, and timely data.
- **Invest in the SDGs and Those Left Behind:** Donors should adequately fund efforts to achieve the SDGs. This is particularly crucial for low-income countries, where official development assistance (ODA) is disproportionately necessary. Donors should meet internationally agreed targets by contributing 0.7 percent of gross national income (GNI) to ODA as well as 0.15-0.2 percent of GNI to the Least-Developed Countries.

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