



## World Food Day- Zero Hunger Challenge

### Context

- The World Food Day was observed globally on October 16<sup>th</sup>.

### About World Food Day

- World Food Day is observed every year in honour of Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of United Nations (UN).
- World Food Day theme for 2018 is 'Our actions are our future'.
- The principal reason behind launching and celebrating world food day is to secure and advance the food security across the world, particularly in days of the crisis.
- It calls for a global pledge to achieve zero hunger by 2030.

### Important facts related to hunger at global level

- The United Nations aims to achieve Zero Hunger World by 2030 in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal -1.
- Children are dying at a rate of every five to ten seconds" from hunger or malnutrition.
- For every one percent increase in hunger, there's a two percent increase in migration. Hence, it will have huge impact on countries especially developed ones.
- According to a latest report released by UN, one of every nine people on the planet suffered from hunger in 2017, marking the third consecutive annual increase.
- According to an FAO report, around 155 million children are estimated to be chronically malnourished
- On the other hand, over 600 million people are obese.

### Measurement of hunger

- Hunger is usually understood as an uncomfortable or painful sensation caused by insufficient food energy consumption. Scientifically, hunger is referred to as food deprivation.
- International Food Policy Research Institute(IFPRI) measures hunger through its Global Hunger Index (GHI) which is composed of following four indicators:
  - **Undernourishment:**the share of the population that is undernourished (that is, whose caloric intake is insufficient)
  - **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);
  - **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)
  - **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).



## Statistics of hunger in India

- According to FAO estimates in 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2018' report, 195.9 million people are undernourished in India. By this measure 14.8% of the population is undernourished in India.
- 51.4% of women in reproductive age between 15 to 49 years are anaemic
- 38.4% of the children aged under five in India are stunted while 21% suffer from wasting.
- The Global Hunger Index 2017 ranks India at 100 out of 119 countries.
- Malnutrition in children under-five also results in nearly half of the 1.3 million deaths occurring in the country each year.

## Reasons behind widespread hunger and malnutrition in India

- Reasons of hunger are multi-dimensional in nature which are depicted as following-
  - **Poverty:** Around 23.6% of Indian population lives below \$1.25 per day on purchasing power parity. Though it does not alone lead to malnutrition, it seriously affects the availability of nutritious food for most vulnerable people of society.
  - **Sanitation:** Sanitation gives rise to multitude of factors such as diseases, infections etc to drive vulnerable section towards hunger and malnutrition.
  - **Socio-cultural factors:** According to an estimate of the World Bank, about 60% of those who are hungry are female. The explanation for this imbalance is that, compared to men, women more often forego meals to feed their children.
  - **Disease/infection:** diseases such as tuberculosis, measles and diarrhoea are directly linked to malnutrition and further vulnerability of illness.
  - **Conflicts:** People are often compelled to flee to other safe places which lead to losing of their farms, livelihood means which drives them towards hunger.
  - **Seasonal migration:** being a livelihood strategy for a long period of time for Indian people, it puts tremendous pressure on poor people such as casual labourers. They live in unhygienic conditions which accentuates problem of malnutrition.
  - **Climate change:** According to a UN studies in over 40 developing countries, the decline in agricultural production caused either directly or indirectly by climate change could dramatically increase the number of people suffering from hunger in the coming years.
  - **High food wastage:** In developed countries a lot of food items are wasted due to improper eating habits, however, in developing nations like ours, it happens due to a lack of technology and infrastructure.





## **Way ahead for India**

*At present, India is facing a conflicting situation where at one hand it has a record production of food grains with overflowing storages while on the other hand it has largest number of hungry people in the world. To overcome this situation following measures need to be undertaken-*

- **Address poverty first-***The Government has to active work towards eradicating poverty from India. This would require incessant efforts towards accelerating inclusive growth, access to credit and insurance to poor, strengthening Public Distribution System, efficient utilization of funds on social infrastructure etc.*
- **Ensuring food security-***India has to make farming efficient and more productive (through use of technologies, changing farm practices etc.) since it has a daunting task to cater to the needs of billions of people.*
  - *It also includes steps to be taken in view of impending climate change effects as highlighted by various reports and most recently by Intergovernmental Penal on Climate Change (IPCC) report.*
- **Improving infrastructure-***the complete supply chain right from farm inputs to production to marketing and distribution needs a significant overhaul for last-mile delivery and reduction of food wastage.*
- **Awareness-***Besides income, sufficient health and nutrition awareness among the people (about wholesome, balanced and natural diets; healthy child-feeding and caring practices) is essential. Hence, an effective nutrition communication campaign to be continuously conducted (in schools, public places, print and social media) that would help children and communities, regardless of their income and education levels, in understanding how they should respond to their nutritional needs.*
- **Effective implementation of various initiatives-***The Government has already taken many steps in form of National Food Security Act, Direct Benefit Transfer, National Nutrition Mission, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and many more. However, there is still a huge scope in improving implementation of these efforts.*