

'GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX NOT BASED ON AN OPINION POLL'

Relevant for: Economy | Topic: Food processing and related industries in India: scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements and supply chain management

A mother feeding her child at a government hospital in Palghar, Maharashtra. Prashant Nakwe
Prashant Nakwe.

German non-profit Welthungerhilfe (WHH), which co-published the Global Hunger Index (GHI) this year, rubbished the Union Government's allegation on Saturday that its ranking of India as among the 16 worst countries was based on an opinion poll. It also said the Government was wrong to confuse "undernourishment" with "undernutrition".

Following the launch of the GHI on Thursday that ranked India 101 out of 116 countries, the Government expressed its shock and questioned the "unscientific" methodology used by its two publishers, Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe, which relied on a "four-question" opinion poll to calculate one of the four indicators used to arrive at the GHI score. The Government singled out the "undernourishment" indicator, because it was the only one where India's performance deteriorated relative to previous years — undernourishment prevalence rose from 14% to 15.3% between 2017-2019 and 2018-2020. "The GHI uses the prevalence of undernourishment indicator, which is assessed by FAO [Food and Agriculture Organization] using Food Balance Sheet data from each country," Miriam Wiemers, Advisor, Global Hunger Index, told *The Hindu* in an email.

A Food Balance Sheet presents a comprehensive picture of the pattern of a country's food supply during a specified reference period. It shows for each food item the sources of supply and its utilisation.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development on Friday said instead of relying on a poll, the index should have used the measurement of weight and height to calculate the "undernourishment" indicator.

"This represents a misunderstanding of the undernourishment indicator. Undernourishment is a measure of the proportion of the population with inadequate access to calories and is based on data regarding the food supply in the country. It is not a measure of weight and height," said Ms. Weimers.

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