

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX IS OUT, INDIA IN 'SERIOUS' CATEGORY AT RANK 107

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Health & Sanitation and related issues

India ranks 107 out of 121 countries on the Global Hunger Index in which it fares worse than all countries in South Asia barring war-torn Afghanistan.

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger at global, regional, and national levels. GHI scores are based on the values of four component indicators - undernourishment, child stunting, child wasting and child mortality. Countries are divided into five categories of hunger on the basis of their score, which are 'low', 'moderate', 'serious', 'alarming' and 'extremely alarming'.

Based on the values of the four indicators, a GHI score is calculated on a 100-point scale reflecting the severity of hunger, where zero is the best score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst. India's score of 29.1 places it in the 'serious' category. India also ranks below Sri Lanka (64), Nepal (81), Bangladesh (84), and Pakistan (99). Afghanistan (109) is the only country in South Asia that performs worse than India on the index.

China is among the countries collectively ranked between 1 and 17 having a score of less than five.

India's child wasting rate (low weight for height), at 19.3%, is worse than the levels recorded in 2014 (15.1%) and even 2000 (17.15), and is the highest for any country in the world and drives up the region's average owing to India's large population.

Prevalence of undernourishment, which is a measure of the proportion of the population facing chronic deficiency of dietary energy intake, has also risen in the country from 14.6% in 2018-2020 to 16.3% in 2019-2021. This translates into 224.3 million people in India considered undernourished.

But India has shown improvement in child stunting, which has declined from 38.7% to 35.5% between 2014 and 2022, as well as child mortality which has also dropped from 4.6% to 3.3% in the same comparative period. On the whole, India has shown a slight worsening with its GHI score increasing from 28.2 in 2014 to 29.1 in 2022. Though the GHI is an annual report, the rankings are not comparable across different years. The GHI score for 2022 can only be compared with scores for 2000, 2007 and 2014..

Globally, progress against hunger has largely stagnated in recent years. The 2022 GHI score for the world is considered "moderate", but at 18.2 in 2022 is only a slight improvement from 19.1 in 2014.

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