



DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

**PATH TO ENDING GLOBAL
HUNGER RUNS THROUGH INDIA**

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PATH TO ENDING GLOBAL HUNGER RUNS THROUGH INDIA

Context

- India has emerged as a pivotal force in driving global progress, as the world begins to turn a corner in its fight against hunger.
 - India's progress is credited to India's transformative approach to food security.

Global Hunger Trends

- According to the **United Nations' State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2025** report, 673 million people faced hunger in 2024 (*688 million in 2023*).
 - Hunger **continues to rise in Africa and Western Asia**, with over 20% of Africa's population affected.
 - If current trends persist, 512 million people could still face hunger by 2030, nearly 60% in Africa.
- Food Insecurity and Diet Affordability:** 2.3 billion people experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2024 — 336 million more than in 2019.
 - 2.6 billion people could not afford a healthy diet in 2024, with affordability worsening in low-income countries (excluding India).
 - Food price inflation** remains a major barrier, peaking at 13.6% globally in January 2023 and up to 30% in low-income countries.
- Child and Maternal Nutrition:**
 - Stunting** among children fell to 23.2% in 2024, down from 180 million in 2012 to 150.2 million.
 - Wasting** (6.6%) and overweight (5.5%) rates among children remain largely unchanged.
 - Exclusive breastfeeding** rose from 37% (2012) to 47.8% (2023) — a significant improvement.
 - Only 34% of children aged 6–23 months meet minimum dietary diversity; 65% of women aged 15–49 meet the minimum.
 - Anaemia** among women increased from 27.6% to 30.7% between 2012 and 2023.
- India & Global Food Security Report (2025):** India stands out for reducing undernourishment from 14.3% (2020–22) to 12% (2022–24) — a **drop of nearly 30 million people**, while global hunger remains high.
 - India's progress helped **offset rising hunger in Africa and Western Asia**.

Concerns & Challenges

- Rising Nutrition Challenges:** High prices of nutrient-rich foods and poor cold-chain infrastructure hinder access.
 - Over 60% of Indians still cannot afford a healthy diet.
 - Nutrient-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, pulses, and animal products remain too expensive for low-income families
- Child and Maternal Nutrition:** India contributed to global gains in exclusive breastfeeding, which rose from 37% (2012) to 47.8% (2023).
 - However, anaemia among women increased from 27.6% to 30.7%, and dietary diversity for children remains low.
- Weak Post-Harvest Infrastructure:** India loses up to 13% of food between farm and market due to poor logistics.
 - Lack of cold storage, inefficient supply chains, and outdated transport systems lead to spoilage and reduced availability.
- Rising Malnutrition and Micronutrient Deficiencies:** Even as hunger declines, malnutrition, obesity, and hidden hunger (micronutrient deficiencies) are on the rise.
 - These issues are especially prevalent among urban poor and rural communities.
- Low Agricultural Productivity:** Despite being one of the largest food producers, India struggles with low yields due to:
 - Fragmented land holdings;
 - Limited access to modern farming techniques;
 - Climate variability and erratic weather patterns.

- **Limited Nutrition Education and Awareness:** Many families lack knowledge about balanced diets and nutritional needs, especially for children and pregnant women.
- **Policy and Governance Gaps:** While digital reforms have improved food distribution, coordination across states, data accuracy, and last-mile delivery still need strengthening.
 - ♦ Migrant populations and informal workers often fall through the cracks.

India's Policy Reform & Innovation

- **Revamping the Public Distribution System (PDS):**
 - ♦ **Digitalization:** Aadhaar-enabled targeting, biometric authentication, and real-time inventory tracking improve efficiency and reduce leakage.
 - ♦ **One Nation One Ration Card:** Makes food entitlements portable across states, helping migrant workers access subsidized food anywhere in India.
- **Nutrition-Focused Social Programs:**
 - ♦ **PM POSHAN (School Feeding Scheme):** Now emphasizes dietary diversity and nutrition sensitivity, aiming to improve child development outcomes.
 - ♦ **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS):** Targets early childhood nutrition through fortified meals and health monitoring.
 - ♦ **POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission):** Focuses on reducing stunting, anemia, and low birth weight among children and mothers.
- **Boosting Agricultural Productivity:**
 - ♦ **National Food Security Mission:** Promotes crop diversification, improved seeds, and sustainable farming practices to increase yields of rice, wheat, and pulses.
 - ♦ **Agro-climatic planning:** Tailors interventions to local conditions for better results.
- **Food Fortification and Biofortified Crops:**
 - ♦ **Zero Hunger Programme:** Develops biofortified plants and promotes genetic gardens to improve micronutrient intake.
 - ♦ Fortification of staples like rice, wheat, and oil with iron, folic acid, and vitamin A is being scaled up.
- **Nutrition Education and Behavior Change:**
 - ♦ Campaigns like **Eat Right India** encourage healthier food choices and hygiene practices.
 - ♦ Community health workers and school programs are being trained to spread awareness about balanced diets.
- **Improving Cold Chains and Market Linkages:** Investments in post-harvest infrastructure, such as cold storage and digital logistics, aim to reduce food loss and improve access to perishable, nutrient-rich foods.
- **Transforming the Agrifood System:**
 - ♦ Boosting production of **nutrient-rich foods** like pulses, vegetables, fruits, and animal products.
 - ♦ Investing in **post-harvest infrastructure** (cold storage, logistics) to cut the 13% food loss between farm and market.
 - ♦ Supporting **women-led enterprises and FPOs** cultivating climate-resilient crops.
 - ♦ Leveraging **digital tools** such as AgriStack, e-NAM, and geospatial platforms to improve market access and agricultural planning.

Conclusion

- With five years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals — especially **SDG 2: Zero Hunger** — India's example offers hope.
- It has demonstrated that hunger reduction is possible when backed by **political will, smart investment, and inclusive policies**.

Source: TH

Mains Practice Question

Q. To what extent can India's approach to food security and nutrition serve as a model for ending global hunger, and what limitations might hinder its global applicability?