

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3221
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.03.2020

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

3221. SHRI RAMESH CHAND BIND:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the value of India in Global Hunger Index in the list of 117 countries according to the latest global report and the rank of India in Global Hunger Index as per the studies conducted on 119 countries in the year 2018;
- (b) the reduction registered in the hunger/malnutrition in India during the last three years and the percentage of population still deprived of two square meals; and
- (c) the details of the malnourished children in the country during the last three years and the number of child deaths due to malnutrition during the said period?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) As per Global Hunger Index Report 2019 prepared by “Welthungerhilfe” and “Concern Worldwide” India’s score was 30.3 and it has ranked 102nd among the 117 countries.

(b)& (c) Global Hunger Index (GHI) does not reflect India’s true picture as it is a flawed measure of “Hunger”. It should not be taken at face value as it is neither appropriate nor representative of hunger prevalent in a country. Out of its four components, only one component i.e, undernourishment is directly related to hunger. The two indicators, namely; Stunting and Wasting are outcomes of complex interactions of various other factors like sanitation, genetics, environment, and utilisation of food intake apart from hunger which is taken as the causative/outcome factor for stunting and wasting in the GHI. Also, there is hardly any evidence that the fourth indicator, namely, child mortality is an outcome of hunger. Further, the methodology used in compilation of GHI are flawed. The technique used for standardisation of indicator values puts more emphasis on child-wasting and under five mortality which are not representing the hunger situation in overall population of the country. Data used in the GHI report are sourced from international agencies which are not updated as per the latest data available in the country.

Moreover, the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) 2016-18 (Done under the aegis of MoHFW) shows that India has made substantial improvement in two of the parameters used in the GHI. Prevalence of stunting has reduced from 38.4% as per NFHS-4 to 34.7% and wasting has slashed down from 21.0% to 17.3 % as per the CNNS report. Also, under-5 mortality as per Sample Registration System (SRS)-2017 is 3.7% whereas, as per the GHI-2019 it is reported as 3.9%. These figures have not been taken into account in the in calculation of GHI-2019. Our country’s performance would have been better, had the GHI score been calculated on the basis of CNNS/SRS data on stunting, wasting and under-five mortality. This method would have improved India’s ranking position from 102 to 91.

Data on nutritional indicators is captured under the National Surveys conducted periodically by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The trends in nutritional status of children, women and men as reported under the National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) and Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey are as under:

Indicators	NFHS-3 2005-06 (%)	NFHS-4 2015-16 (%)	CNNS 2016-2018 (%)
Children Under 5 years			
Wasting	19.8	21	17.3
Stunting	48	38.4	34.7
Under-nutrition	42.5	35.7	33.4
Adults (15-49 years)			
Underweight Women (BMI <18.5 Kg/m ²)	35.5	22.9	-
Underweight Men (BMI <18.5 Kg/m ²)	34.2	20.2	-

Malnutrition is not a direct cause of death among children under five years of age. However, it can increase morbidity and mortality by reducing resistance to infections. The overall under five child mortality rate has reduced from 74 (NFHS-3) to 50 (NFHS-4) deaths per thousand live births.
