

India 100th on global hunger index, trails North Korea, Bangladesh

India stood at 97th position in last year's rankings. India has a "serious" hunger problem and ranks 100th out of 119 countries on the global hunger index – behind North Korea, Bangladesh and Iraq but ahead of Pakistan, according to a report.

The country's serious hunger level is driven by high child malnutrition and underlines need for stronger commitment to the social sector, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) said in its report.

India stood at 97th position in last year's rankings.

"India is ranked 100th out of 119 countries, and has the third highest score in all of Asia – only Afghanistan and Pakistan are ranked worse," IFPRI said in a statement.

"At 31.4, India's 2017 GHI (Global Hunger Index) score is at the high end of the 'serious' category, and is one of the main factors pushing South Asia to the category of worst performing region on the GHI this year, followed closely by Africa South of the Sahara," it added.

As per the report, India ranks below many of its neighbouring countries such as China (29th rank), Nepal (72), Myanmar (77), Sri Lank (84) and Bangladesh (88). It is ahead of Pakistan (106) and Afghanistan (107).

North Korea ranks 93rd while Iraq is at 78th position.

The GHI, now in its 12th year, ranks countries based on four key indicators – undernourishment, child mortality, child wasting and child stunting.

The report ranked 119 countries in the developing world, nearly half of which have 'extremely alarming,' 'alarming' or 'serious' hunger levels.

"India's high ranking on the Global Hunger Index [GHI] again this year brings to the fore the disturbing reality of the country's stubbornly high proportions of malnourished children," the statement said.

IFPRI pointed out that more than one-fifth of Indian children under five weigh too little for their height and over a third are too short for their age.

"Even with the massive scale up of national nutrition-focused programmes in India, drought and structural deficiencies have left large number of poor in India at risk of malnourishment in 2017," said P.K. Joshi, IFPRI Director for South Asia.

However, he said that the on-going efforts are expected to make significant changes in improving the existing situation.

Mr. Joshi appreciated that India has developed and launched an action plan on 'undernourishment free India' by 2022. The plan shows stronger commitment and greater investments in tackling malnutrition in the coming years.

"As of 2015-16, more than a fifth [21%] of children in India suffer from wasting [low weight for height] – up from 20% in 2005-2006," IFPRI said.

Only three other countries in this year's GHI – Djibouti, Sri Lanka and South Sudan – show child wasting above 20%. India's child wasting rate has not shown any substantial improvement over the past 25 years.

However, India has made considerable improvement in reducing its child stunting rate, down 29% since 2000, but even that progress leaves India with a relatively high stunting rate of 38.4.

Source: xaam.in