

## Prevalence of Undernourishment in India

**Jyoti Chaudhary<sup>1</sup> and Sonali Katoch<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, College of Horticulture & Forestry, Thunag, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, 175048

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, U.P. 221005

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Asia is the home of around 60 per cent of the world's population. So the prevalence of the undernourished people is also high in this continent. The term malnutrition is defined as any deficiency, excess and imbalance in intake of energy or nutrients. Under nutrition includes stunting, wasting, underweight and micronutrient deficiencies or insufficiencies. On the other hand over nutrition includes overweight, obesity and diet related non-communicable diseases.

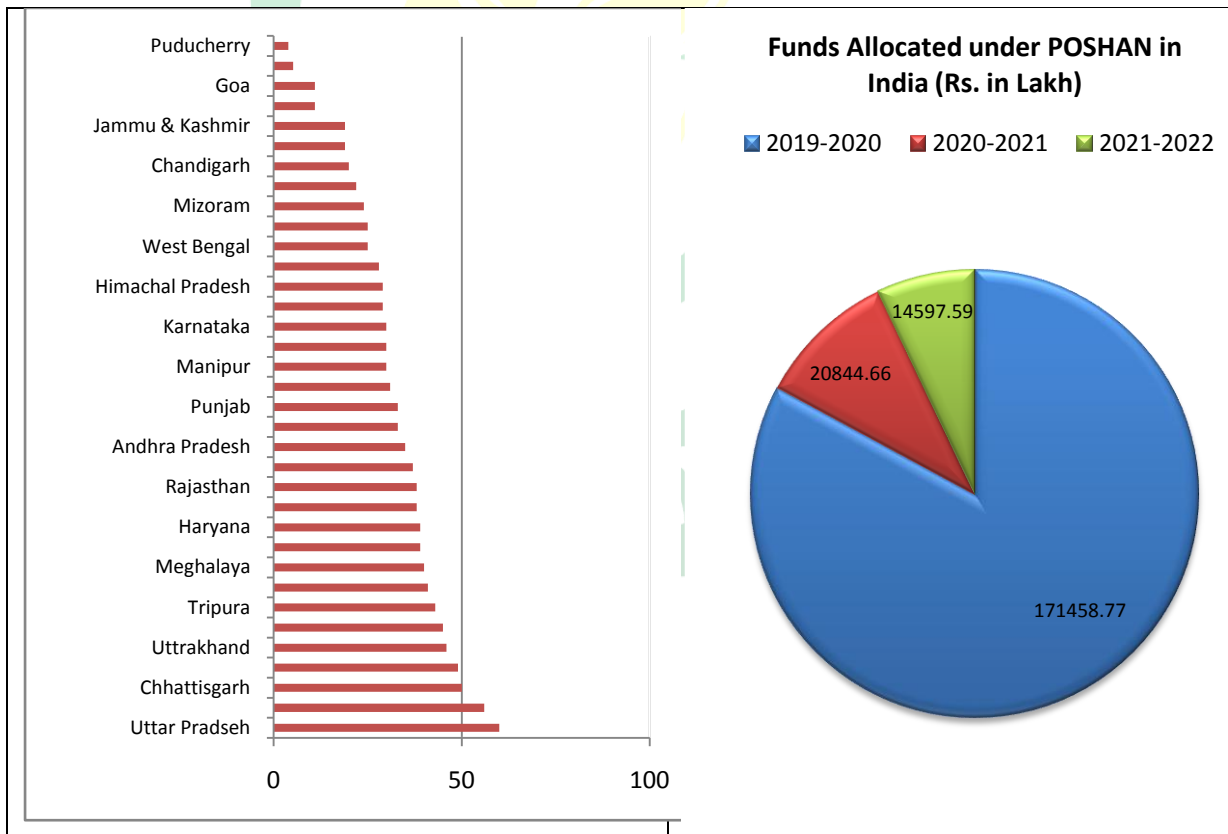
Inequality is one of the major cause of the malnutrition in India is economic inequality. In some parts of the country the disparity in the income and the lack in the diet both in quantity as well as quality are the major causes of the undernourishment. Further the various barriers to health related services, poverty, poor sanitation and lack of safe drinking water facilities and illiteracy are the major causes of the malnutrition in the country. According to the State of Food Security and Nutrition in World 2022 report, the population affected by the hunger has rose to 828 million in 2021, which is 46 million more than 2020 and 150 million more since the pandemic outbreak. The undernourished people in India have declined from 21 % (247.8 million) during 2004-06 to 14 % during 2017-19 and further increased to 16.3 % (224.3 million) during 2019-21 according to UN report. The reduction in the hunger in the region stems from long-term economic growth, reduced inequality and improved access to basic goods and services.

Information on infant and child mortality is relevant to a demographic assessment of the population and important indicator of the country's socioeconomic development and quality of life. The infant mortality and under-five mortality rate in India is 35 and 42 deaths per 1000 live births. The country has observed the decline in the infant mortality rate from 41 deaths per 1000 live births to 35 deaths per 1000 live births during from 2015-16 to 2019-21. Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of deaths per 1000 live births followed by Bihar,

Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh (NFHS, 2019-21). The National Family Health Survey, 2019-21 data out of 22 states only 9 states showed a decline in the number of stunted children, 10 in sated children and 6 in underweight children. Further the number of stunted children under age of 5 years declined to 36.3 million and overweight children declined to 2.2 million in 2020 from 52.3 million stunted and 3 million in 2012.

The obesity in adult population increased by 0.8 % in 2016 from 2012. According to National Family Health Survey-5, 18.7 % women and 16.2 % men (aged 15-49 years) has body mass index (BMI) below normal (BMI < 18.5 Kg/M). 24 % women and 22.9 % men are overweight or obese (BMI ≥ 25.0 Kg/M). 57 % of women between the age group of 15-49 years are anemic.

The population in India unable to afford healthy food increased to 973.3 million in 2020 from 948.6 million from 2019. India stands at 107<sup>th</sup> place out of 121 countries in 2022 Global Hunger Index with a score of 29.1 which comes under serious level of hunger. However the countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Mynamar and Pakistan ranked higher than India on Global Hunger Index.



Infant mortality rate in different states

### **Policies and Infrastructures to combat malnutrition in India**

The government has launched Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the primary beneficiaries are children below five years, pregnant and lactating women. It operates through the Anganwadis. India also launched the National Nutrition Mission or the POSHAN abhiyan in 2018 on the occasion of International Women's Day, to improve nutrition among children, pregnant women and lactating mothers. The National Food Security Mission was started in 2007. The Zero Hunger programme in Indian was started in 2017 for the improvement of agriculture, health and nutrition. It was created by Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the Indian Council of Medical Research, the M.S. Swaminatha Research Foundation and the Biotechnology Industry Research. Eat Right India Movement was started by the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India for providing healthy and nutritious food to the population.