

# State of the World's Children Report 2019 of UNICEF

February 24, 2020

**Source:** *PIB and The Hindu*

The State of World's Children Report 2019 of UNICEF was released in 2019. **For the first time in 20 years, UNICEF's flagship report examines the issue of children, food and nutrition, providing a fresh perspective on a rapidly evolving challenge.**

## Global scenario

- **Globally, at least 1 in 3 children under 5 is not growing well due to malnutrition in its more visible forms: stunting, wasting and overweight.**
- Globally, **at least 1 in 2 children under 5 suffers from hidden hunger** due to deficiencies in vitamins and other essential nutrients.
- Undernutrition continues to exert a heavy toll. In 2018, almost 200 million children under 5 suffered from stunting or wasting while at least 340 million suffered from hidden hunger.
- **Overweight and obesity continue to rise.** From 2000–2016, the proportion of overweight children (5 to 19 years old) rose from 1 in 10 to almost 1 in 5.
- **The number of stunted children has declined in all continents, except in Africa** while the number of overweight children has increased in all continents, including in Africa.
- **The triple burden of malnutrition – undernutrition, hidden hunger and overweight** – threatens the survival, growth and development of children, young people, economies and nations.

1. Stunting – a clear sign that children in a country are not developing well – is both a symptom of past deprivation and a predictor of future poverty.
  2. Wasting can be lethal for children, particularly in its most severe forms. Contrary to common belief, most wasted children around the world live in Asia and not in emergency settings.
  3. Hidden hunger harms children and women. Iron deficiency reduces children’s ability to learn and iron deficiency anaemia increases women’s risk of death during or shortly after childbirth.
  4. Child overweight can lead to early onset of type-2 diabetes, stigmatization and depression, and is a strong predictor of adult obesity, with serious health and economic consequences.
- The greatest burden of all forms of malnutrition is shouldered by children and young people from the poorest and most marginalized communities, perpetuating poverty across generations
  - **Regarding the situation globally**, UNICEF’s report said at least one in three children under five years of age – or 200 million – is either undernourished or overweight.
  - The report states that almost two in three children between six months and two years of age are not fed food that supports their rapidly growing bodies and brains. This puts them at risk of poor brain development, weak learning, low immunity, increased infections and, in many cases, death

## **Where are children not growing well?**



## **Key findings of the report with respect to India**

- As per UNICEF’s State of the World’s Children Report 2019, the **Under 5 Mortality Rate in India is 37 per**

**1,000 live births against Global average of 39 per 1,000 live births** in 2018, which translates to more than 8 lakhs under 5 deaths in India.

- As per the UNICEF 2019 report, **Globalization, urbanization, inequities, humanitarian crises and climate shocks are driving unprecedented negative changes in the nutrition situation of children around the world.**
- In its report, The State of the World's Children 2019, UNICEF said that **every second child in that age group is affected by some form of malnutrition.** This includes **stunting (35%), wasting (17%) and overweight.** Only 42% of children (in the age group of 6 to 23 months) are fed at the adequate frequency and 21% get an adequately diverse diet.
- The report also states that Malnutrition caused 69% of deaths of children below the age of five in India
- **About Indian women's health,** it said every second woman is anaemic. It also said that anaemia is the most prevalent in children under the age of five years. Its prevalence among adolescent girls is twice that of adolescent boys.
- The data states that children under the age of five years are affected by micronutrient deficiencies. While every fifth child under the age five is vitamin A deficient, one in every third baby has vitamin B12 deficiency and two out of every five children are anaemic.
- The report said POSHAN Abhiyaan or the National Nutrition Mission is playing a major role in improving nutrition indicators across India. The Anaemia Mukta Bharat programme to fight anaemic prevalence has been recognized as one of the best programmes implemented by governments across the world to address malnutrition.
- The 6X6X6 strategy (six target beneficiary groups, six interventions and six institutional mechanisms) of the programme has been highlighted for using anaemia testing

and treatment as the entry point to provide information on healthy diets.

- **With respect to Urban India,** the report said that Urban India is moving into an unhealthy food snacking environment, which is influencing children's food choices and this is spreading to rural areas. Food consumption patterns in India reveal that child diets are largely starved of proteins and micronutrients and are influenced by household (adult) food choices.