

The road to zero hunger by 2030 and the Pandemic

GS 2: Issues relating to Poverty and Hunger



Context: The exceptional circumstances we have all been living in through 2020 underscores a threat to food security and agricultural livelihoods, it compounds the threats already faced by 690 million people around the world.

Progress made worldwide to tackle hunger

1. Agricultural productivity has improved significantly in recent decades
2. Welfare states widened distribution machinery
3. Hunger and poverty has been reduced significantly

Indian Progress

1. From net importer to a net exporter of food grains
2. Significantly reduced poverty, malnutrition and hunger in the last two decades

India During COVID-19

1. Central and State governments were able to distribute around 23 million tonnes from India's large domestic food grain reserves in three months (April

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to June) through the Public Distribution System, providing much-needed emergency assistance to families around the country.

2. The government also successfully mobilised food rations for 820 million people from April to November 2020

Challenges ahead: India Specific and Global

1. Climate change continues to be a real and potent threat to agrobiodiversity.
2. Agrobiodiversity is crucial for food security to productivity to livelihoods across food and farm systems
3. A multilateral institution like WFP are underfunded for years
4. climate-related shocks made it difficult for farmers to deal with pest and locust attacks, as well as floods and cyclones
5. the novel coronavirus pandemic is reversing the substantial gains made in the fight against poverty, hunger and malnutrition
6. Intensified food production systems with excessive use of chemicals and unsustainable farming practices cause soil degradation, fast depletion of groundwater table and rapid loss of agro-biodiversity.
7. These challenges multiply with an increase in fragmentation of landholdings. Particularly in India, more than 86% of farmers have less than two hectares of land contributing around 60% of the total food grain production and over half the country's fruits and vegetables.

Interconnected Challenges

There is an inter-connectedness among various challenges. For example, food, energy and water security are interlinked with strong feedback loops. Enhancing food security may lead to diminished water and energy security. It may also have a collateral impact on health security. Raising crop yields with current agricultural strategies means higher incremental use of chemical fertilizers and toxic pesticides. India's unprotected farmers are exposed to serious health risks as a result and often get bankrupted not due to crop failure but debilitating health costs. It is in recognition of these inter-connections that the international community agreed on a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are cross-domain but also cross-national in character, and hence demand greater multilateral cooperation in order to succeed.



Way Forward

1. All this points to two undeniable imperatives: the way we produce food must change through agroecology and sustainable production practices in agriculture and allied sectors;
2. We must stop the waste — one-third of the food we produce is wasted.
3. Multilateralism is the answer to the hunger challenge, particularly in COVID times.
4. The world needs to come out of the awful dilemma of global integration without solidarity to fight challenges like a climate change, pandemic and food security.
5. There is a need for a more democratic world order since a lack of cooperation from even a single state may frustrate success in tackling a global challenge.
6. The UN, and it's three agencies — the FAO (The Food and Agriculture Organization), IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) and WFP (The World Food Programme) — should remain committed to working with government, civil society, farmers' organisations and the private sector to build sustainable food systems.



Should the government regulate TRPs?

GS 2: Statutory, Regulatory and various Quasi-Judicial Bodies.



Last week, the Mumbai Police said that a TRP (Target Rating Points) racket involving three news channels had been busted. Since then, the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC), which monitors the TRPs, has suspended ratings of news channels for three months. The alleged scam has once again highlighted the need for regulation. Television channels are driven by TRPs and it is viewership that drives their business.

What is the issue?

Viewership generates advertisement spending of nearly ₹27,000 crores. Now, every channel from Doordarshan (DD) to the private channels are eyeing this money. This share should be distributed honestly. And that is where the dishonesty comes through TRPs. The financial fraud is one aspect. Now because of that cheating, the channels' ratings are getting distorted. That is the other aspect. Channels are spreading a hate narrative which is violative of the fundamental right of the citizen to know the truth through the media. The media has become a source of disinformation. This is the ethical issue. Both dimensions, legal and ethical, are equally serious. What is now being investigated is financial fraud, which is good enough. We should get to the bottom of the problem.



TRP (Target Rating Points)

Advertising TRPs, or target rating points, are the percentage of a company's target audience that sees its commercials or advertisements. Target audiences are groups of customers who are most likely to purchase a company's products and services. Most small companies measure TRPs for each type of advertising, including television, print, Internet, radio and outdoor advertising. TRPs are calculated by various media companies using a specific formula. Using TRPs as a metric carries certain advantages and disadvantages.

Television Rating Point

TRP is a Television Rating Point. It is the tool that tells us which channel and the programme are viewed most or it indicates the popularity of a TV channel or a programme. It shows how many times people are watching a channel or a particular programme. TRP enables advertisers and investors to understand the mood of the people. According to the TRP of a TV Channel or programme, advertisers decide where to display their advertisements and investors will decide about the investment of the money.

The increase or decrease in the TRP of any programme directly affects the income of that TV channel in which the programme is coming. The TV channel like Sony, Star Plus, Z Channel, etc. earn money through advertisements. Suppose the TRP of a program or channel is low which means that people are watching it less so, advertisers will give fewer advertisements and pay less. But, if the TRP is high for the programme then more advertisements, advertisers, and money. So, we can say that TRP depends not only on the channel but on the programme as well. For example, if the TRP of a programme says Rising Star is higher than any other programme then the advertiser would like to give advertisements in that programme and also pay more.

Way Forward:

There's no question of government regulation, but at the same time, the government can facilitate the process. The government can pass a law that any violation will face legal action. The government can play a facilitator, but it has to be industry run, it has to be self-regulation and at the same time an independent regulation.

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Public meters are installed in households for calculation of TRPs. These meters should be installed in such a way that the sample population is representative of India. Methodology for the collection of data, its processing should be transparent.

What is the role of the Bark?

BARC (Broadcast Audience Research Council) India is an industry body set up to design, commission, supervise and own an accurate, reliable and timely television audience measurement system for India. It currently measures TV Viewing habits of 197 million TV households in the country, using 40,000 sample panel homes. This will go up to 50,000 in the next couple of years, as mandated by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

Guided by the recommendations of the TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) and MIB notifications of January 2014, BARC India brings together the three key stakeholders in television audience measurement - broadcasters, advertisers, and advertising and media agencies, via their apex bodies.