Society & Social Justice · GS - II

How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack of availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2018	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Food availability; food access; nutrition security; poverty; public distribution system; healthcare; sanitation; maternal nutrition; human development; policy implementation

Model Answer

Introduction

Hunger is not merely a consequence of insufficient food production. It also reflects poverty, unequal access to food, inadequate healthcare, poor sanitation and weaknesses in human development policies.

Why Food Availability Alone Is an Inadequate Explanation

1. **Access and affordability:** Food may be available in markets, yet poor households may lack sufficient purchasing power.
2. **Nutritional deficiencies:** Calorie intake alone does not ensure adequate protein, vitamins and micronutrients.
3. **Healthcare gaps:** Infections and inadequate healthcare reduce nutrient absorption and worsen malnutrition.
4. **Sanitation and clean water:** Unsafe water and poor sanitation contribute to diarrhoeal diseases and undernutrition.

5. **Maternal and child health:** Maternal malnutrition, low birth weight and inadequate infant feeding can perpetuate intergenerational deprivation.
6. **Implementation failures:** Exclusion from food entitlements, delivery gaps and inadequate awareness can weaken nutrition programmes.
7. **Social inequalities:** Gender discrimination and unequal household food distribution can leave women and children more vulnerable.

Way Forward

India needs an integrated approach combining food security, effective public distribution, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, maternal healthcare, sanitation, clean drinking water, education and livelihood security. Monitoring should assess nutritional outcomes, not merely food stocks distributed.

Conclusion

Food availability is essential, but hunger cannot be eliminated through supply measures alone. Effective human development policies and equitable access to nutrition, healthcare and sanitation are equally important.

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