

## Course correction – For nutrition security

### India remains lacking in the commitment to tackle undernourishment

The UN's State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report for 2017 has important pointers to achieve **nutrition** policy reform. At the global level, the five agencies that together produced the **assessment** found that the gains achieved on food security and better nutrition since the turn of the century may be at risk. Although absolute numbers of people facing hunger and poor nutrition have always been high, there was a reduction in the rate of undernourishment since the year 2000. That has slowed from 2013, registering a worrying increase in 2016. The estimate of 815 million people **enduring chronic** food **deprivation** in 2016, compared to 775 million in 2014, is depressing in itself, but more important is the finding that the deprivation is even greater among people who live in regions affected by conflict and the extreme effects of climate change. In a confounding finding, though, the report says that child undernutrition rates continue to drop, although one in four children is still affected by **stunting**. These are averages and do not reflect the **disparities** among regions, within countries and between States. Yet, the impact of the economic **downturn**, many violent conflicts, fall in **commodity** export revenues, and failure of agriculture **owing** to drought and floods are all making food **scarce** and expensive for many. They represent a **setback** to all countries trying to meet the **Sustainable** Development Goal on ending hunger and achieving food security and improved nutrition.

India's efforts at improving access to food and good nutrition are led by the National Food Security Act. There are special nutritional schemes for women and children operated through the States. In spite of such **interventions**, 14.5% of the population suffers from undernourishment, going by the UN's assessment for 2014-16. At the national level, 53% of women are **anaemic**, Health Ministry data show. What is more, the Centre recently said it had received only 3,888 complaints on the public distribution system (PDS) over a five year period. All this shows that the Centre and State governments are **woefully** short on the commitment to end undernourishment. Institutions such as the State Food Commissions have not made a big difference either. Distributing nutritious food as a public health measure is still not a political **imperative**, while ill-**conceived** policies are making it difficult for many to do this. The report on nutritional deficiency should serve as an opportunity to evaluate the role played by the **PDS** in bringing about **dietary diversity** for those relying on **subsidised** food. In a report issued two years ago on the role played by **rations** in shaping household and nutritional security, the NITI Aayog found that families below the poverty line consumed more **cereals** and less milk compared to the **affluent**. **Complementing** rice and wheat with more nutritious food items should be the goal.

**WORD LIST**

1. **Nutrition** : (Food)  
Synonym : nourishment, diet, nutriment, subsistence.
2. **Assessment** : (evaluation)  
Synonym : appraisal, estimate, judgement, computation, estimation, valuation, rating
3. **Enduring** : (lasting)  
Synonym : abiding, surviving, permanent
4. **Chronic** : (incessant, never-ending)  
Synonym : constant, continual, continuing, continuous, deep rooted, habitual, incurable, lifelong, lingering, persistent, protracted.
5. **Deprivation** : (taking, keeping away; need)  
Synonym : destitution, hardship, privation, denial, detriment
6. **Stunting** : (delay, restrict)  
Synonym : abate, curb, curtail, decrease, diminish, hinder, impede, lessen, moderate, reduce, relax, slacken, stall, temper
7. **Disparities** : (difference)  
Synonym : distinction, discrepancy, distinction, divergence, gap, imbalance, inequality, variation
8. **Downturn** : (drop)  
Synonym : decline, deterioration, dip, plunge, slide, slump, downstick, fall
9. **Commodity** : (Possession, merchandise)  
Synonym : asset, goods, material, produce, product, property, stock, belonging
10. **Owing** : (unpaid)  
Synonym : mature, owed, unsettled, due, in debt, overdue, payable
11. **Scare** : (frightened state)  
Synonym : alarm, panic, shock, alert, fright, terror
12. **Setback** : (disappointment)  
Synonym : blow, defeat, delay, difficulty, hindrance, impediment, misfortune, obstacle, reversal, slowdown, trouble
13. **Sustainable** : (Tenable)  
Synonym : continual, continuous, viable, feasible, unceasing
14. **Interventions** : (the act of intervening)  
Synonym : interference, mediation, arbitration, intercession, interruption
15. **Anaemic** : (suffering from anaemia)  
Synonym : bloodless, pale, ashen, white, grey, feeble, weak, poor, puny
16. **Woefully** : (sorely)  
Synonym : extremely, acutely, badly, greatly, sadly, severely, painfully, distressfully
17. **Imperative** : (necessary, authoritative)  
Synonym : compulsory, critical, crucial, essential, immediate, important, indispensable, inescapable, obligatory, pressing, urgent, vital, acute
18. **Ill-conceived** : (unrealistic)  
Synonym : absurd, bizarre, foolish, goofy, insane, irresponsible, ludicrous, odd, outrageous, ridiculous, silly, strange, weird

19. **Dietary** : (as in eatable, as in diet) (digestive)  
Synonym : comestible, digestible, nourishing, nutrient, nutritional
20. **Diversity** : (variety, difference)  
Synonym : diversification, distinction, heterogeneity, multiplicity, unlikeness, variance
21. **Subsidised** : (support financially)  
Synonym : sponsor, fund, finance, capitalize
22. **Rations** : (allotment of limited supply)  
Synonym : allowance, consignment, quota
23. **Cereal** : (edible grain)  
Synonym : corn, grain, rice, wheat, oats, rye
24. **Affluent** : (wealthy, plentiful)  
Synonym : moneyed, prosperous, rich, well-off, well-to-do
25. **Complementing** : (complete)  
Synonym : achieve, integrate, conclude, consummate, finish, fulfil, perfect

\*\*\*\*\*

### Course correction – Sinking rupee

#### As the dollar puts emerging market currencies under strain, the RBI needs to have a plan

The rupee's troubles just do not seem to end. On Thursday, the **currency weakened** past 69 **intra-day** against the U.S. dollar, an all-time low. The rupee, which has lost almost 8% in value since January 1, is the worst performing currency in Asia this year. It is, however, not the only currency to be in the **doldrums**. **Emerging** market currencies as a group have witnessed a sharp correction in their value against the dollar this year. The MSCI emerging markets currency **index**, for instance, is down about 6% since the beginning of April. The rise in international **crude** oil prices is one of the reasons behind the rupee's decline as importers have had to **shell out** more dollars to fund their purchases. India's current account deficit, which jumped to 1.9% of GDP in the fourth quarter of 2017-18 from just 0.6% a year earlier, is now expected to widen to 2.5% in FY 2019. This could **spell** even more trouble for the rupee as the demand for dollars could turn out to be **overwhelming**. The dollar index, which **gauges** the value of the dollar against a host of major global currencies, is up about 7.5% since February. The rise in global trade tensions **amidst** the ongoing trade war could be another factor behind the **root** in emerging market currencies is the tightening of U.S. monetary policy.

Investors attracted by higher **yields** in the United States have been pulling their capital out of India at an increasing pace over the last few months. Foreign **portfolio** investors, in fact, took out Rs.29,714 crore in May, almost a doubling of **outflow** compared to Rs.15,561 crore in April. Most of the foreign fund outflow this year has come out of the bond market, which explains the **steep** fall in Indian bond prices. None of this **turbulence** in emerging markets, however, is surprising. The tightening of monetary policy by the U.S. Federal Reserve has

traditionally caused the turning of the global credit cycle, which eventually leads to various crises around the world. It is hard to **determine** if the worst is over yet for emerging market currencies. But the fact that the American central bank expects to raise interest rates further this year suggests that more pain could be in store. The government, as well as the Reserve Bank of India, which recently raised domestic interest rates in response to rising external economic risks, may need to think out of the box to avoid a crisis similar to the **taper tantrum** of 2013.

### WORD LIST

1. **Currency** : (Paper and coin money of a country)  
Synonym : Cash, bills, coinage, coins, dinero, notes, moolah
2. **Weakened** : (tired, injured)  
Synonym : depleted, exhausted, sluggish, weak, drained, faint
3. **Intraday** : (occurring within one day)  
Example : "the dollar slipped from an intraday high of
4. **Doldrums** : (depression)  
Synonym : gloom, malaise, slump, stagnation, stupor, apathy, boredom, dejection, dullness, dumps, ennui
5. **Emerging** : (come out, arise)  
Synonym : appear, arrive, derive, develop, emanate, gush, issue, loom
6. **Index** : (Indication)  
Synonym : basis, clue, evidence, order, arrange, formula, guide, indicator, mark, model
7. **Crude** : (unrefined, vulgar, natural, unpolished in manner)  
Synonym : awkward, backward, dirty, earthy, filthy, foul
8. **Shell** : structure; covering  
Synonym : case, crust, frame, framework, hull, husk, nut
9. **Overwhelming** : (overpowering)  
Synonym : amazing, astounding, breath taking, crushing, devastating, exciting
10. **Gauges** : (measure, standard, judge)  
Synonym : basis, benchmark, bore, capacity, check, criterion, extent, guide, guideline, height, indicator, magnitude.

11. **Amidst** : (middle from two points)

Synonym : between, amid, amidst, among, at intervals, halfway, in, in the middle, inserted, mid, midway.

12. **Rout** : (overwhelming defeat)

Synonym : beating, clobbering, comedown, confusion, disaster, flight, hiding, overthrow, retreat

13. **Yield** : (production of labor, produce, give in, surrender)

Synonym : crop, earnings, harvest, income output, produce, profit, return

14. **Portfolio** : (flat case for transporting papers)

Synonym : attaché case, bag, brief-bag, briefcase, case, container, envelope, folder, notebook, valise

15. **Outflow** : (efflux)

Synonym : discharge, drainage, effluence, effluent, emergence, gush, gushing, rush, spout.

16. **Steep** : (extreme in direction, course)

Synonym : abrupt, arduous, breakneck, declivitous, elevated, erect, lofty, sharp, sheer.

17. **Turbulence** : (disorder)

Synonym : agitation, commotion, conflict, confusion, disturbance, instability, turmoil, unrest

18. **Determine** : (conclude, decide)

Synonym : actuate, arbitrate, complete, figure, finish, incline, induce

19. **Taper** : (decrease)

Synonym : abate, close, diminish, reduce

20. **Tantrum** : (fit)

Synonym : animosity, dander, huff, temper, wax

\*\*\*\*\*

## SOME IMPORTANT VOCABULARY

1. **Pellucid (adjective)**

**Meaning:** translucently clear.

**Usage:** mountains reflected in the pellucid waters.

2. **Pariah (noun)**

**Meaning:** an outcast.

**Usage:** they were treated as social pariahs.

3. **Taciturn (adjective)**

**Meaning:** (of a person) reserved or uncommunicative in speech; saying little.

**Usage:** after such gatherings she would be taciturn and morose.

4. **Perfunctory (adjective)**

**Meaning:** (of an action) carried out without real interest, feeling, or effort.

**Usage:** The guards gave a perfunctory look up and down the carriage.

5. **Transient (adjective)**

**Meaning:** lasting only for a short time; impermanent.

**Usage:** A transient post-war baby boom.

6. **Reprobate (noun)**

**Meaning:** an unprincipled person.

**Usage:** He had to present himself as more of a lovable reprobate than a spirit of Corruption.

7. **Libertine (noun)**

**Meaning:** a person, especially a man, who freely indulges in sensual pleasures without regard to moral principles.

**Usage:** His image as an unbridled libertine is a total myth.

8. **Tractable (adjective)**

**Meaning:** (of a person) easy to control or influence.

**Usage:** She has always been tractable and obedient, even as a child.

9. **Sedulous (adjective)**

**Meaning:** (of a person or action) showing dedication and diligence.

**Usage:** He watched himself with the most sedulous care.

**10. Intrepid (adjective)**

**Meaning:** fearless; adventurous (often used for rhetorical or humorous effect).

**Usage:** The intrepid band braved a precipitous mountain track.

**11. Morose (adjective)**

**Meaning:** sullen and ill-tempered.

**Usage:** She was morose and silent when she got home.

**12. Demur (verb)**

**Meaning:** raise objections or show reluctance.

**Usage:** Normally she would have accepted the challenge, but she demurred.

**13. Equipoise (noun)**

**Meaning:** balance of forces or interests.

**Usage:** This wine represents a marvellous equipoise of power and elegance.

**14. Garrulity (Noun)**

**Meaning:** excessive talkativeness, especially on trivial matters.

**Synonyms:** talkativeness, garrulousness, loquacity, loquaciousness, volubility, verbosity,

**Usage:** They were irritated by his ungovernable garrulity.

**15. Arrant (Adjective)**

**Meaning:** complete, utter

**Usage:** What he is talking is arrant nonsense!

**16. Consequential (Adjective)**

**Meaning:** following as a result or effect.

**Usage:** A loss of confidence and a consequential withdrawal of funds.

**17. Attenuate (Verb)**

**Meaning:** reduce the force, effect, or value of.

**Usage:** Her intolerance was attenuated by an unexpected liberalism.

**18. Precarious (Adjective)**

**Meaning:** dependent on chance; uncertain

**Usage:** He made a precarious living as a painter.

**19. Enervate (Verb)**

**Meaning:** make (someone) feel drained of energy or vitality.

**Usage:** The scorching sun enervated her.

**20. Equivocate (Verb)**

**Meaning:** use ambiguous language so as to conceal the truth or avoid committing oneself.

**Usage:** The government have equivocated too often in the past.

**21. Assiduous (Adjective)**

**Meaning:** showing great care and perseverance.

**Usage:** She was assiduous in pointing out every feature.

**22. Lassitude (Noun)**

**Meaning:** a state of physical or mental weariness; lack of energy

**Usage:** She was overcome by lassitude and retired to bed.

**23. Sycophant (Noun)**

**Meaning:** a person who acts obsequiously towards someone important in order to gain advantage.

**Usage:** He was surrounded by flatterers and sycophants.

*“Successful and unsuccessful  
people do not vary greatly in  
their abilities.*

*They vary in their desires to reach their potential.”*

John Maxwell