

Course correction – **Stunted, wasted: on Global Nutrition Report 2018**

The national framework to improve nutrition for children must be upgraded on priority

The health, longevity and well-being of Indians has improved since Independence, and the high levels of economic growth over the past two-and-half-decades have made more funds available to spend on the social sector. Yet, the reality is that a third of the world's stunted children under five — an estimated 46.6 million who have low height for age — live in India. A quarter of the children display wasting (that is, low weight for height) as well. As the Global Nutrition Report 2018 points out, this finding masks the wide variation in stunting levels in different parts of the country. District-level data show high and very high levels of stunting mainly in central and northern India (more than 30% and 40%, respectively), but less than 20% in almost the entire south. This shows the important role played by political commitment, administrative efficiency, literacy and women's empowerment in ensuring children's health. Food and freedom go together, and the availability of one strongly influences access to the other; social institutions can work to improve nutrition and children's welfare in free societies, and the absence of hunger enables people to develop their capabilities. Governments should acknowledge the linkages and commit themselves to improved nutritional policies. The national framework to improve nutrition already exists. The Anganwadi Services scheme, which incorporates the Integrated Child Development Services, caters to children up to age six, and to pregnant and lactating women. If it has not worked well in several States, it must be subjected to a rigorous review and targeted interventions for supplementary nutrition made.

Among the factors affecting the quantity and quality of nutrition are maternal education, age at marriage, antenatal care, children's diet and household size. Now that mapping of malnutrition at the district level is available, as in the Global Nutrition Report, it is incumbent on State governments to address these determining factors. A second issue is that of the quality of nutrition in packaged foods available to children. Going by the report, only 21% of these foods in India were rated as being healthy, based on overall energy, salt, sugar and saturated fat on the negative side, and vegetable, fruit, protein, fibre and calcium as positive factors. The fact that the global average of processed foods scored only 31% and a peak of 37% in New Zealand indicates that whole foods and cooked meals emerge superior. India should invest more of its economic prosperity in its welfare system, without binding itself in restrictive budgetary formulations. The Economic Survey 2017-18 put social services spending at 6.6% of GDP, an insignificant rise after a marginal decline from the 6% band during the previous year to 5.8%. The latest report on stunting and wasting should convince the Centre that it needs to understand the problem better and work with the States to give India's children a healthy future.

Meanings of Difficult Words :

- **Stunted** - unable or not allowed to develop or to do well
- **Nutrition** - food considered as something that keeps you healthy
- **Framework** - a system of rules, laws, agreements etc that establish the way that something operates in business, politics, or society
- **Longevity** - the fact of having a long life or existence
- **Well-being** - the satisfactory state that someone or something should be in, that involves such things as being happy, healthy, and safe, and having enough money
- **Stunt** - prevent from growing or developing properly

- **Respectively** - used for saying that something happens separately to each of the people or things mentioned in the order in which they were mentioned
- **Efficiency** - the ability to work well and produce good results by using the available time, money, supplies etc in the most effective way
- **Empowerment** - the process of gaining freedom and power to do what you want or to control what happens to you
- **Acknowledge** - to accept or admit that something exists, is true, or is real
- **Incorporate** - to add or include something as a part of something else
- **Lactate** - if a woman or female animal lactates, she produces milk in her breasts in order to feed her baby
- **Rigorous** - thorough and careful
- **Intervention** - a situation in which someone becomes involved in a particular issue, problem etc in order to influence what happens
- **Quantity** - the amount of something
- **Maternal** - relating to being a mother
- **Antenatal** - relating to the medical care of pregnant women, or to the time before a baby is born
- **Malnutrition** - a medical condition in which you are weak or ill because you do not eat enough or do not eat enough of the right foods
- **Be incumbent on** - to be necessary for someone
- **Determining** - controlling your decision to do something
- **Saturated** - completely filled with things or people
- **Processed food** - the food which was freeze-dried to preserve nutrients and freshness
- **Superior** - better than someone or something else in quality or skill
- **Invest** - to use your money with the aim of making a profit from it
- **Prosperity** - the state of being successful and having a lot of money
- **Welfare** - the health and happiness of people
- **Budgetary** - relating to a budget
- **Formulation** - the development of a plan, system, or proposal
- **Economic Survey** - Finance Ministry of India's view on the annual economic development of India
- **Insignificant** - not large or important enough to be worth considering
- **Decline** - to become less or worse

Course correction – **A moving menace: on mob violence**

Mob violence in the name of cow protection is shredding civic order

The violence in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district is yet another notice of the toll being taken on civic order on account of the failure to crack down on vigilante mobs. Two persons, including a police inspector, lost their lives to bullets fired in Syana when villagers gathered outside a police post in protests over a rumour that cow carcasses had been found in the vicinity. In a curious coincidence, Monday's violence touches back to the hate crime that marked the beginning of this long spell of vigilante violence over 'cow protection' across north India. Subodh Kumar Singh, the inspector killed in Bulandshahr, had been the first investigating officer when Mohammed Akhlaq

was lynched near Dadri, also in western U.P., on September 28, 2015 on a rumour that he had beef in his possession. Then as now, an equivalence was sought to be made between the crime of mob violence and murder on the one hand, and the rumoured cow slaughter on the other. Alongside those charged with the violence, who include members of the Bajrang Dal, an FIR has been filed against seven Muslims for alleged cow slaughter should reveal whether the mob at the police post formed organically, or whether there was a conspiracy to set up a communally polarising confrontation. In the din of pledges of speedy investigation by everyone from police to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, there is no equivalent messaging that no rumour or act of cow slaughter justifies mob violence.

Ever since the BJP came to power nationally in 2014, its governments in the States have moved to tighten laws prohibiting cow slaughter. Attendant to the legislative prohibition, bands of gau rakshaks, or cow-protection vigilantes, have created an atmosphere of fear, purportedly acting on suspicion of cow slaughter to round up and lynch at will cattle traders and passersby alike. Probes into the killing, in most cases, move in parallel with investigations into the allegations of cow slaughter or the possession of beef. And in a pattern that has crystallised, the hurt sentiments of gau rakshaks are played up to reinforce an equivalence between actual murderous crime and rumoured cow slaughter (often, as in the case of Pehlu Khan in Rajasthan's Alwar district in April 2017, just for transporting cattle). The police, picking up the political signalling or even out of fear of being outnumbered, tend to play down the gravity of the crime — as in the case of a lynching in Hapur this year, initially projected as an outcome of road rage. In a disturbing indication of the impunity gau rakshaks believe they enjoy, they have captured on camera incidents of violence, including Monday's. Why wouldn't they, when the state has been playing to their script.

Meanings of Difficult Words :

- **Menace** - someone or something that is dangerous and likely to cause harm
- **Mob** - a large crowd of people that is dangerous or difficult to control
- **Shredding** - to destroy something
- **Take toll** - to harm or damage someone or something, especially in a gradual way
- **On account of** - because of someone or something
- **Crack down** - to start dealing with someone or something much more strictly
- **Vigilante** - someone who tries to catch and punish criminals by themselves, without waiting for the police
- **Protest** - an occasion when people show that they disagree with something by standing somewhere, shouting, carrying signs, etc
- **Rumour** - unofficial information that may or may not be true
- **Carcass** - the body of a dead animal
- **Vicinity** - the area near a particular place
- **Curious** - unusual and interesting
- **Coincidence** - a situation in which separate things happen by chance at the same time or in the same way
- **Hate crime** - a crime that is done by someone because they hate the group that the victim (=person who is attacked) belongs to
- **Lynch** - if a crowd of people lynch someone who they believe is guilty of a crime, they kill them without a legal trial
- **Beef** - the meat from a cow
- **Possession** - something that you own

- **On the one hand...on the other hand** - used for giving two different opinions about something
- **Slaughter** - the killing of animals, usually for their meat
- **Alleged** - claimed to be true, even though this has not been proved
- **Reveal** - to let something become known, for example a secret or information that was previously not known
- **Organically** - happening or developing in a natural and continuous process
- **Conspiracy** - a secret plan by a group of people to do something bad or illegal, especially in politics
- **Communal** - relating to a particular community
- **Polarise** - to form two very different groups, opinions, or situations that are completely opposite to each other, or to cause this to happen
- **Confrontation** - a situation in which people or groups are arguing angrily or are fighting
- **Din** - a very loud unpleasant noise that lasts for a long time
- **Pledge** - to promise seriously and publicly to do something
- **Justify** - to show that there is a good reason for something, especially something that other people think is wrong
- **Prohibit** - to officially stop something from being done, especially by making it illegal
- **Purportedly** - said by some people to be real or true, but not proved to be real or true
- **Cattle** - cows and bulls kept by farmers for their milk or meat
- **Trader** - someone who buys and sells things
- **Passersby** - someone who is walking past a place, especially when an accident or violent event happens
- **Probe** - an attempt to find out the truth about an issue, problem, or accident
- **Allegation** - a statement that someone has done something wrong or illegal even though this has not been proved
- **Reinforce** - to make an idea, belief, or feeling stronger
- **Murderous** - very violent and causing deaths
- **Outnumber** - if one group outnumbers another, there are more in the first group than in the second
- **Play down** - to try to make a problem or difficult situation seem less important than it is
- **Gravity** - the seriousness or importance of something
- **Outcome** - the final result of a process, meeting, activity etc
- **Road rage** - violent behaviour by a driver towards another driver
- **Impunity** - freedom from any risk of being punished for doing something wrong or bad

Course correction – **Shielding witnesses: on protection scheme**

A robust witness protection scheme will strengthen the criminal justice system

The witness protection programme is at last in place. Pending legislation by Parliament, the Supreme Court has asked States to implement a scheme framed by the Centre to protect witnesses in criminal trials from threat, intimidation and undue influence. Given the abysmal rate of convictions in the country, it is inexcusable that it took so long. The need to protect witnesses has been

emphasised by Law Commission reports and court judgments for years. Witnesses turning hostile is a major reason for most acquittals. In the current system, there is little incentive for witnesses to turn up in court and testify against criminals. Besides threats to their lives, they experience hostility and harassment while attending courts. The tardy judicial process seldom takes into account the distance they have travelled or the time they have lost in attending court, only to be told they have to return another day. As Justice A.K. Sikri points out, the condition of witnesses in the Indian legal system is "pathetic", as it takes them for granted. It is gratifying that the court has played a proactive role in getting the Centre and the States to come up with a concrete proposal. The Centre deserves credit for coming forward to suggest that its draft witness protection scheme be introduced by judicial mandate instead of waiting for formal legislation.

In its minutiae the scheme appears workable, but its efficacy will be confirmed only with the passage of time. It broadly classifies witnesses in need of protection into three types based on the threat assessment. A witness protection order will be passed by a competent authority. The scheme is to be funded by budgetary support from State governments and donations. This is at variance with the Law Commission's recommendation in 2006 that the Centre and the States share the cost equally. Basic features such as in camera trial, proximate physical protection and anonymising of testimony and references to witnesses in the records are not difficult to implement. The real test will be the advanced forms of identity protection: giving witnesses a new identity, address and even 'parentage', with matching documents. All this needs to be done without undermining their professional and property rights and educational qualifications. The introduction of the scheme marks a leap forward. Until now, there have been *ad hoc* steps such as those outlined for concealing the identity of witnesses in anti-terrorism and child-centric laws. A few dedicated courtrooms for vulnerable witnesses, mostly child victims, are also functional. However, expanding such facilities and implementing a comprehensive and credible witness protection programme will pose logistical and financial challenges. It will be well worth the effort, as the scheme could help strengthen India's tottering criminal justice system.

Meanings of Difficult Words :

- **Shielding** - to protect something
- **Witness** - someone who sees a crime, accident, or other event happen
- **Robust** - strong and successful
- **In place** - in the correct position
- **Legislation** - a law, or a set of laws
- **Trial** - the process of examining a case in a court of law and deciding whether someone is guilty or innocent
- **Threat** - a situation or an activity that could cause harm or danger
- **Intimidation** - the action of frightening or threatening someone, usually in order to persuade them to do something that you want them to do
- **Undue** - not necessary or reasonable
- **Abysmal** - very bad
- **Conviction** - a decision by a court of law that someone is guilty of a crime
- **Inexcusable** - inexcusable behaviour is so bad or rude that you cannot forgive the person who behaved like that
- **Emphasise** - to give particular importance or attention to something
- **Hostile** - behaving in a very unfriendly or threatening way towards someone
- **Acquittal** - an official judgment in a court of law that someone is not guilty of the crime they were accused of

- **Incentive** - something that makes you want to do something or to work harder, because you know that you will benefit by doing this
- **Turn up** - to come somewhere
- **Testify** - to make a statement about something that you saw, know, or experienced, usually in a court of law
- **Harassment** - annoying or unpleasant behaviour towards someone that takes place regularly
- **Tardy** - slow to do something
- **Seldom** - not often
- **Pathetic** - useless or not effective in an annoying way
- **Take someone for granted** - to expect someone to always be there and do things for you even when you do not show that you are grateful
- **Gratifying** - making you feel pleased and satisfied
- **Proactive** - taking action and making changes before they need to be made, rather than waiting until problems develop
- **Concrete** - practical
- **Minutiae** - very small or unimportant details
- **Efficacy** - effectiveness in producing the result that you intended
- **Assessment** - the process of making a judgment or forming an opinion, after considering something or someone carefully
- **At variance with** - if one thing is at variance with another, they are completely different and seem to oppose each other
- **Proximate** - closest or most direct
- **Anonymising** - to remove any information that shows which particular person something relates to
- **Testimony** - a formal statement about something that you saw, know, or experienced, usually given in a court of law
- **Parentage** - your parents considered as belonging to a particular country, religion, or social class
- **Undermine** - to make something or someone become gradually less effective, confident, or successful
- **Ad hoc** - done only when needed for a specific purpose, without planning or preparation
- **Conceal** - to hide something so that it cannot be found
- **Vulnerable** - someone who is vulnerable is weak or easy to hurt physically or mentally
- **Comprehensive** - including many details or aspects of something
- **Credible** - able to be believed or trusted
- **Pose** - to cause something, especially a problem or difficulty
- **Tottering** - if a system or process totters, it becomes weak and looks as if it will soon stop or be destroyed

Course correction – **Quick retreat: on French protests**

The French government rolls back a planned fuel tax hike, but the protests are widening

French President Emmanuel Macron's reforms programme could be at risk of losing steam in the wake of weeks of violent countrywide protests triggered by a proposed increase in the fuel tax. Paradoxically, as head of the centrist La République En Marche party, he had swept to power on a pledge of modernising the economy and restoring popular trust in politicians. Public anger against the fuel tax has escalated into a broad-based opposition to the government's overall policies. Prime Minister Edouard Philippe initially said the duty hike would be deferred for six months. But on Wednesday the government cancelled the tax proposal altogether, arguing that a levy that was meant to induce motorists to go green was not worth the price if it undermined social cohesion. Mr. Philippe has also suggested that the introduction of additional safety checks on cars due to take effect next year could be delayed. The U-turn on measures to reduce CO2 emissions suggested that the government was on the back foot. The government has also said that it was open to reinstating the wealth tax, which was revised last year to narrow its scope. The measure was intended to improve the investment climate and boost growth and employment. But the accompanying flat tax rate on capital gains and dividends, besides limits on trade unions to negotiate wages, only served to reinforce Mr. Macron's image as a President of the rich.

The yellow-vest protests have shone the light on France's tax system, its rates said to be the highest in the European Union, and buttressed the demand for improvements in the standard of living. The government is committed to increasing the minimum wage from next year but could now face pressure for further concessions on social welfare. Conversely, Paris would also be constrained to demonstrate compliance with EU rules that set an annual fiscal deficit target of below 3% of GDP on member-states. Adherence to common norms would especially be on Brussels's radar after the recent stand-off involving the Italian government. A concern linked to the withdrawal of the tax increase is the rise in France's carbon emissions. The mass protests have, unwittingly, pitted the majority who would have been hit by the higher levy against the imperative to meet the Paris climate agreement targets. Mr. Macron, who has fashioned himself as a champion of the green cause, can realise the mission to combat global warming only by rallying his people. His ability to regain lost ground will determine the prospects of warding off the populist threat in the 2019 European Parliament elections. His handling of the challenges at home will crucially define his ambitions on the EU stage.

Meanings of Difficult Words :

- **Retreat** - to avoid a dangerous, unpleasant, or embarrassing situation, especially by moving away from it
- **Protest** - as strong complaint or disagreement
- **Roll back** - to remove something, or to reduce the influence of something
- **Reform** - a change that is intended to correct a situation that is wrong or unfair, or make a system work more effectively
- **In the wake of** - happening after an event or as a result of it
- **Trigger** - to make something happen
- **Paradoxically** - used for saying that something is strange because it is the opposite of what you expect
- **Centrist** - not extreme in your political beliefs
- **Popular** - a popular belief, feeling, attitude etc is one that many people have
- **Escalate** - to become much worse or more serious, or to make something do this
- **Tax-deferred** - taxed at a later time
- **Altogether** - completely
- **Levy** - an amount of money that you have to pay, for example as a tax
- **Induce** - to cause something, especially a mental or physical change

- **Cohesion** - a situation in which people or things combine well to form a unit
- **U-turn** - a sudden and complete change of policy by a government or by someone in authority
- **Emission** - a substance, especially a gas, that goes into the air
- **On the back foot** - in a worse situation than other people or groups
- **Reinstate** - to start using or having something such as a law or benefit again
- **Boost** - to help something to increase, improve, or become more successful
- **Dividend** - a share of the profits of a company, paid once or twice a year to the people who own the company's shares
- **Negotiate** - to try to reach an agreement by discussing something in a formal way, especially in a business or political situation
- **Reinforce** - to make an idea, belief, or feeling stronger
- **Buttress** - to make someone or something stronger by supporting them in some way
- **Concession** - something you give or allow to someone in order to reach an agreement
- **Social welfare** - services provided by the government or private organizations to help poor, ill, or old people
- **Conversely** - used for introducing a sentence, or part of a sentence, which says something that is the opposite of the other part
- **Constrain** - to force someone to do something that they do not want to do
- **Compliance** - the practice of obeying a law, rule, or request
- **Adherence** - the action of continuing to obey a rule, law, agreement etc
- **Stand-off** - a disagreement or fight in which neither opponent can do anything to win or achieve their aim
- **Concern** - a feeling of worry about something, especially one that a lot of people have about an important issue
- **Unwittingly** - in a way that is not conscious or deliberate
- **Imperative** - extremely important and urgent
- **Combat** - fighting
- **Rally** - a public meeting that a lot of people go to in order to support someone or something or to protest against someone or something
- **Regain lost ground** - to become successful again after having been delayed or having had problems
- **Determine** - to control what something will be
- **Prospect** - the possibility that something will happen, especially something good
- **Ward off** - to prevent someone or something unpleasant from harming or coming close to you
- **Ambition** - something that you very much want to do, usually something that is difficult to achieve

☞ " "I don't measure a man's success by how high he climbs, but how high he bounces when he hits the bottom. – George S. Patton " "☞