

Zero Hunger Programme [UPSC Government Schemes]

- Topic of the Day

The Zero Hunger Programme is an ambitious government scheme aimed at reducing hunger across the country. Government schemes are very important for the UPSC exam, especially from the [IAS prelims](#) point of view. Find more information on this scheme in this article.

Zero Hunger Programme - Background

India's Zero Hunger Programme was launched on October 16, 2017. The day marks the 'World Food Day'. The focus of the initiative is agriculture, health and nutrition.

- Hunger and malnutrition is a serious problem in India.
- As per the **Global Hunger Index 2019**, India is ranked 102 out of 117 countries.
 - India is ranked much below its south Asian neighbours such as Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.
 - The report pointed out that "India is suffering from a serious hunger problem".
 - India's Child Wasting Rate is the highest in the world.
 - Just 9.6% of all children between the ages of 6 months to 23 months are provided with a minimum acceptable diet.
 - As per the report, India is one of the 45 nations of the world where hunger leads to serious issues.

Zero Hunger Programme - Details

The programme was initiated by the ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) along with the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) and the M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation with BIRAC (Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council). State governments will also be involved in the initiative.

- The programme aims at making farm interventions and incorporates among others:
 - Organising the farming system for nutrition.
 - Setting up genetic gardens for biofortified plants.
 - Initiating zero hunger training.
- The programme was initially launched in three districts:
 - Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh)
 - Koraput (Odisha)
 - Thane (Maharashtra)
- These districts will act as models of integrated approach in dealing with hunger and malnutrition by adopting appropriate agricultural and/or horticultural practices.
- The initiative is in tandem with India's [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), one of which is ending hunger by 2030.
- The programme was announced by eminent scientist [Dr. M S Swaminathan](#).

Genetic Garden for biofortified plants/crops

It is a garden containing the germplasm of naturally biofortified crops via plant breeding. These gardens are houses for crops and plants which help supplement micronutrient deficiencies, including iron, vitamin A, iodine, zinc, etc.

