**Hungry Stomachs increases as international market sales and consumption also go up – India and its contradictions**

 I know many donors whom I approach say that India is a fast developing country. India is testing nuclear and Indians are buying European companies then why we should help India?? The most unfortunate fact behind all this is the Tyranny of experts. India stopped counting its poor and they count only the millionaires and billionaires. International community count the cars, phones and other consumer luxury goods sold. On one hand this is a fact that India has the largest number of billionaires and they soared 26% and their wealth soared 62% over the last two years.

 But India ranked 100th position among 119 countries on the global Hunger Index ( GHI) 2017 and in fact slipped three positions this year as against 2016. The international policy research watch publish report annually has come out with this findings. They use four socio economic indicators – undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting and child mortality.

 The GHI report comes after the latest National Family Health Survey (2015-2016) had already warned of three major concerns of child nutrition in the country. First, the availability of solid food with breast milk for young children declined from 52% to 42%. Second, the proportion of children between six and 23 months who received an adequate diet came down to 9.6% and the third, no more than 48.4% of households had access to improved sanitation facilities according to this report. Sanitation is an important factor in improving nutrition.

 As such, India’s GHI score has positively reduced from 46.2 in 1992 to 31.4 in 2017, but it is yet 10 points higher than the word average of 21.8. According to GHI report, one in three Indian children under five is underweight, one in three is stunted and one in five is wasted, according to 2015-16 NFHS.

 “ Even with the massive scale of national nutrition-focused programs in India, drought and structural deficiencies have left a large number of poor in India at risk of malnourishment in 2017”, said P.K. Joshi, IFPRI’s South Asia director.

Child wasting is one of four indicators in the GHI. In India, it has increased from 17.1% in 1998-02 to 21% in 2012-16. This way above the global prevalence: 9.5% of all under – 5 children suffer from wasting.

 With 21% of under 5 – children suffering from wasting, the report notes that India is one of the very few countries that have made no strides over the last 25 years in checking the prevalence of this indicator. Only three other countries in GHI 2017, Djibouti, Sri Lanka and South Sudan – have child – wasting score over 20%.

 With a GHI score of 31.4, India is at the high end of the ‘serious’ category, the report said, adding that “ given that three quarters of South Asia’s population reside in India, the situation in that country strongly influences South Asia’s regional score”.

 India’s poor performance brings home the disturbing reality of the country’s stubbornly high proportions of malnourished children – more that one –fifth of Indian children under – 5 weigh too little for their height and over a third are too short in height for their age.

 India’s pathetic performance would look further glaring when compared with its neighbours. Data from the GHI report show that India’s rank (100) was lower than that of all its neighbours – China (29) Nepal(72), Myanmar (77), Bangladesh(88) Sri Lanka (84),. Only Pakistan had a lower rank than India at 106. Even North Korea (93) and Iraq 978) fared better than India in GHI rankings.

 And when the comparison is done with the BRICS countries ( Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) India’s position looks pathetically poor. It was the last among them. Interestingly, BRICS members are all leading developing or newly industrialized countries and are distinguished by their fast – growing economies. India’s GDP has grown significantly over the years but it has failed to improve the life of its poor.

 GHI survey corroborates World Bank’s earlier findings that

Source: International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington

Say that India accounted for the largest number of people living below international poverty line in 2013, with 30% of its population under the $ 1.90- a- day poverty measure. One in three of the poor population word wide lives in India the world body said in its inaugural edition of the report ‘Poverty and Shared Prosperity.

 India accounts for one in three of the poor population worldwide, the world body said in its inaugural edition of the report ‘Poverty and Shared Prosperity’.

 As for child under – nutrition, a study by the World bank Group and UNICEF ‘Ending Extreme Poverty: A focus on Children’ finds that India is home to over 30% of almost 385 million children living in extreme poverty, the highest in South Asia.

Source: International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington

That is, despite high GDP growth the fate of the poor and their children has not improved much. May be Amartya Sen was right in cautioning Indian policy makers’ obsession with GDP growth figures without looking at its distribution aspects.

 We at St. Joseph’s Development admit in our orphanages children who at times are severely malnourished and are very susceptible to disease. The girls who come to us are almost all of them are underweight.

 Dear friends I appreciate all these sponsor who support our children as they see the reality without paying attentions to the tysonny of the false prophets