

LEXOLOGY

India: Food Fortification

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What is Food Fortification

Food Fortification is the process of deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients in a food so as to improve the nutritional quality of food and to provide public health benefit with minimal risk to health. The substances that are added to food to provide micronutrients are known as fortificants and the foods that have undergone the process of fortification are known as fortified food. Food Fortification is governed by the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2017 (hereinafter referred to as the “Regulations”) which were operationalized with effect from October 16, 2016.

General Principles of Food Fortification

Essential nutrients are added to foods for the purpose of contributing to any of the following:

- Preventing or reducing a risk of correcting a deficiency of one or more essential nutrients in the population or specific population group
- Meeting requirements or recommended intake of one or more essential nutrients
- Maintaining or improving health
- Maintaining or improving the nutritional quality of foods.

Obligations of manufacturers

- Manufacturers who undertake the process of fortification should ensure that the level of micronutrients in fortified food does not fall below the minimum level as specified in the Regulations.

- Manufacturers who undertake the process of fortification should ensure that the level of micronutrients does not exceed the highest amount of micronutrient that can be safely added to the food, having regard to recognized international standards.
- Manufacturers and packers of fortified food shall make an undertaking on quality and also submit evidence to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (hereinafter referred to “FSSAI”) as prescribed in the Regulations.
- All fortified food should be packed, labeled, handled and distributed in accordance with standards as mentioned in the Regulations.

Establishment of Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC)

In order to promote large scale fortification of food and to nudge and facilitate food business to adopt fortification as a norm, FSSAI has established Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC) in collaboration with Tata Trusts and various International NGOs working in the field of nutrition as a resource centre.[1]FFRC is a Resource and Support Centre to promote large-scale fortification of food across India, and also provides information and inputs on standards and food safety, technology and processes, premix and equipment procurement and manufacture, quality assurance and quality control for fortification of foods.