



Food Fortification for Sustainable Community Nutrition

By **eHealth Network**

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Food fortification can significantly impact nutrition and health, and for 70% of India's population with low incomes and nutrient deficiency, it has transformative potential, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Inoshi Sharma, Director (Social and Behavioral Change), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Government of India says, "At FSSAI we have been working for the past 4 years on Food Fortification. We have been providing technical assistance to various governing bodies and stake holders. We added the fortification system in wheat flour, rice, salt, oil and milk. We will be coming out with mandatory fortification of milk and oil. From April 2021, with the help of the Government, fortified rice will be available throughout the country. We are also working on bring out double fortified salt in the market. In December 2020, we have also introduced fortification in cereals. We hope to have a safe fortification system in our country."



Dr. Rajan Sankar, Senior Advisor, Nutrition, Tata Trusts, Director, The India Nutrition Initiative (TNI) explains, “Malnutrition has multiple dimensions. We consume imbalanced food, and what straddles the most is the micro nutrients deficiency. Nearly 2 billion people round the globe has micro nutrients deficiency. As the dietary adversity is getting less, specially in the rural areas, it is a huge challenge to aware about proper nutrition for every individual. With the Covid 19 pandemic, the importance of Nutrients has been highlighted. Consuming a diversified diet in accordance with the economic condition, also providing vitamins and minerals to a target group and staple food fortification can be some points to a better nutritious society”.



Deepti Gulati, Head of Programmes, GAIN India explains, “Dietary diversification is the best policy as an individual is getting food from the natural resources, like fruits, vegetables, milk etc. 50 per cent of our diet comprises of cereals, like rice, wheat. 15 percent is dairy products, 9 percent is pulses and egg etc. Also 5 percentage of fat. But only 11 percent comes from fruits and vegetables which are the main Nutrients in the diet, thus micro Nutrients are consumed less. The real challenge comes in fortifying rice and wheat flour. Under the National Food Security Act, the government has mandated that fortified cereals with Iron folic acid and B 12 is a must in Mid-Day meals, which is a good initiative.”



Arun Om Lal, Sr. Vice President, Hexagon Nutrition says, “Adding pre mixes in micro nutrients like vitamins and minerals enriches the food. The right amount of vitamins and minerals according to RDA level to a particular food product is important. There is a lot of quality assurance adhered to while we are dealing with a particular nutrient. It is a scientific way where we mix the vitamins and minerals and convert them into a premix.”