

ONE DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR ON RICE FORTIFICATION

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Agriculture Issues and related constraints

The Department of Food and Public Distribution, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution organised a one-day National Seminar on Rice Fortification" here today.

While addressing the seminar, Secretary, DFPD, Shri Sanjeev Chopra mentioned, "We are on track to achieve the target of 100% distribution of fortified rice across all rice consuming districts in the country."

Government of India is committed to ensure the nutritional security of the country through fortified rice distribution across government food safety net schemes. The seminar served as a dynamic platform for multistakeholder discussions where besides government stakeholders, technical experts from institutions and academia provided meaningful insights on different aspects of rice fortification programme such as evidence, safety of consumption, operational challenges and quality assurance and quality control. The prevailing challenges and queries of states were addressed by the group of experts and deliberations were made to derive a roadmap to the programme for the coming year.



From Left to Right: Dr. Kapil Yadav (AIIMS), Shri Ashok K K Meena (CMD, FCI), Shri Sanjeev Chopra (Secretary, DFPD), Ms. Elisabeth Faure (Country Director WFP India), Sunil Bakshi (Advisor FSSAI) and Dr. Sirimavo Nair (MSU Baroda)

The seminar was divided into four technical sessions, each deliberating on discussions held in prior working group meetings focussing on key aspects of rice fortification. The first of these

sessions emphasised on concerns regarding safety of consumption of fortified rice for the general population as well as individuals with Haemoglobinopathies and SCD. Dr. Reena Das, Dept. of Haematology, PGIMER, Chandigarh recommended on behalf of the panel that fortified rice consumption is safe and addressed the prevailing myth regarding toxicity from its consumption. The second session led by Dr. Prashant T., Associate Professor at St. Johns Research Institute, Bangalore aimed at providing evidence-based insights from National and International experiences on rice fortification. He shared numerous studies which pointed out the effectiveness of iron fortification in the reduction of anaemia. In the third technical session, a group of experts from organisations like FSSAI, FCI, BIS, WFP, Microsave and IIT Kharagpur working at the national level as well as at the field, engaged in a discussion to explore strategies to address on-ground operational challenges to streamline the distribution process. Concluding the day's discussions, the last technical session led by Dr. Balasubramaniam, Joint Director, FSSAI focussed on providing insights into the quality aspects and recommended strategies that may be adopted to improve the quality of fortified rice being distributed.

The seminar witnessed the launch of a national IEC campaign developed by the Department for awareness generation at the beneficiary level and release of a guidance handbook on rice fortification which will act as a ready reckoner for all guidelines, notifications and orders related to rice fortification.

The event brought together technical experts, leaders from government ministries, research institutes and international organizations fostering an enriching dialogue to build a common understanding and leverage universal supply of fortified rice in food safety net schemes.

Food Secretaries from States/UTs across the country along with technical experts in the domain and development partners working on-ground participated in the Seminar jointly reflecting upon the challenges and opportunities together for achieving the transformation of food and nutrition security ecosystem in the country.

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