



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Rice Fortification

Published On: 23-08-2023

Why is in news? One Day National Seminar on Rice Fortification

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

The 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.

Fortification:

Fortification is the **process of adding nutrients to food products that are not naturally present** or are present in insufficient amounts.

Fortification of rice can be done by **coating the rice grains with a premix of micronutrients**, or by producing extruded rice kernels that are enriched with micronutrients and then blended with regular rice.

Fortified rice is **nearly identical to traditional rice** in aroma, taste, and texture. This process is done in the rice mills at the time of milling of rice.

Fortification of rice is found to be a **cost-effective and complementary strategy** to increase vitamin and mineral content in diets with low turnaround time (TAT) and a step towards nutritional security.

Similarly, other vital micronutrients can be added to staples like wheat flour, oil, and milk.

The reason behind choosing staple items is to **reach a larger population**.

According to the FSSAI norms, 1 kg fortified rice shall contain iron (28mg-42.5mg), folic acid (75-125 microgram) and Vitamin B-12 (0.75-1.25 microgram).

In addition, rice may also be fortified with micronutrients, singly or in combination, at the level– zinc, Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B3 and Vitamin B6 per Kg.

Need of Food Fortification:

India has very high levels of malnutrition among women and children. According to the Food Ministry, **every second woman in the country is anaemic and every third child is stunted**.

India has **slipped to 101st position in the Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021** of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94th.

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The deficiency of micronutrients or micronutrient malnutrition, also known as “**hidden hunger**”, is a serious health risk.

Rice is one of India’s staple foods, consumed by about two-thirds of the population.

Per capita rice consumption in India is 6.8 kg per month. Therefore, fortifying rice with micronutrients is an option to supplement the diet of the poor.