



Rice Fortification

For Prelims: Food Fortification and related schemes.

For Mains: Food Fortification and its significance.

Why in News?

The Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution informed the Rajya Sabha that the government approved the [Centrally Sponsored Pilot Scheme](#) on "**Fortification of Rice & its Distribution under Public Distribution System**" for a period of 3 years beginning in 2019-20 with total outlay of Rs. 174.64 Cr.

What is the Scheme?

▪ About:

- To address anemia and micro-nutrient deficiency in the country, the Government of India approved this **scheme for a period of 3 years in 2019-20**.
- Under the Scheme, [FCI \(Food Corporation of India\)](#) has been asked to come up with a comprehensive plan for procurement and distribution of fortified rice in all the Districts of the country under [Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\)](#) & [Mid-Day Meal \(MDM\) Scheme](#) from 2021-2022.
 - The mid-day meal scheme is now known as [PM POSHAN](#).
- Special focus remains on supplying fortified rice to the 112 specially identified [Aspirational Districts](#) of the country.

▪ Objectives the Scheme:

- **Distribution of Fortified Rice through Public Distribution System**, to cater 15 Districts in the country - preferably one district per State in the initial phase of Implementation.
- **Coverage of [NFSA \(National Food Security Act\)](#)** beneficiaries under PDS with Fortified Rice in the selected Districts.
- **Facilitate cross learning and sharing of best practices** among States/UTs and DoF&PD (Department of Food and Public Distribution).
- To evaluate the provision, **coverage and Utilization of Fortified Rice by the target population** as well as the efficiency/effectiveness of the consumption of fortified rice in reducing the targeted micronutrient deficiencies in different age and gender groups.

What is Food Fortification and its Need?

▪ Fortification:

- Fortification is the **addition of key vitamins and minerals such as iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A & D to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content**.
- These nutrients may or may not have been originally present in the food before processing.

▪ Fortification of Rice:

- According to the Food Ministry, fortification of rice is **a cost-effective and complementary strategy to increase vitamin and mineral** content in diets.
 - According to FSSAI norms, 1 kg fortified rice will contain iron (28 mg-42.5 mg), 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, with zinc, Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B2, Vitamin B3 and Vitamin B6.
- **Need of Fortification:**
 - India has very high levels of malnutrition among women and children. According to the Food Ministry, every second woman in the country is anemic 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.
 - 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.

What are the Initiatives related to Fortification?

- **FSSAI Regulations:**
 - In October 2016, FSSAI operationalized the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016 for fortifying staples namely Wheat Flour and Rice (with Iron, Vitamin B12 and Folic Acid), Milk and Edible Oil (with Vitamins A and D) and Double Fortified Salt (with Iodine and Iron) to reduce the high burden of micronutrient malnutrition in India.
- **Nutritional Strategy:**
 - India’s National Nutritional strategy, 2017, had listed food fortification as one of the interventions to address anemia, vitamin A and iodine deficiencies apart from supplementation and dietary diversification.
- **Milk Fortification Project:**
 - The **[Milk Fortification Project](#)** was launched by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in collaboration with the World Bank and Tata Trusts, as a pilot project in 2017.

[Source: PIB](#)

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