



Press Release

Second Regional Workshop on Food Fortification – The Second Wave

Sowing Fortified Saplings of Change

Udaipur, Fri, 28 June 2019: Over the last two years, Food Fortification has gained a sizeable traction in India. It is now established as one of the key interventions in government of India's major nutrition flagship programmes. States/UTs have adopted fortification across supplementary nutrition programmes (SNPs), namely, ICDS, MDM, and PDS. In open market, the availability of fortified brands is increasing with top and regional industry players taking proactive steps towards adoption of fortification.

In order to extend the benefits of fortification to all beneficiaries, by tracking the progress and understanding the challenges faced by the States and Industry, a series of eight regional, action-oriented workshops are being conducted by the Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC, FSSAI) jointly with Tata Trusts across the country. The meetings will result in a country wide food fortification scoreboard which will support the adoption of fortification as a cost-effective, scalable and sustainable intervention to tackle micronutrient malnutrition at large. These workshops will culminate in the unveiling of the national fortification scoreboard.

The second of the eight workshops was conducted today in Udaipur, Rajasthan targeting the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh. The day-long workshop saw a participation by over 55 key stakeholders. It followed a unique format wherein the first half was dedicated to understanding the perspective of the State departments and identifying the gaps while the second half witnessed engagement with regional industries thereby aligning demand and supply.

Officials from respective State Food Safety Net Programme departments talked about the current status, challenges of fortification in their States and outlined the suggested way forward. One-on-one interaction through a working group model was conducted with the States SNPs to capture robust information on various parameters through questionnaires comprising various parameters such as number of beneficiaries, cost per meal per beneficiary, allocation of staples per beneficiary, among others.

During the second half, industry members were briefed about the fortification environment in the country. They were nudged to adopt fortification as per FSSAI standards for fortification and were informed about the demand of the same. Their queries were addressed and they were assured that technical assistance and end-to-end support will be provided by



development partners to the industries for implementing food fortification. In order to build a database of potential fortified staple manufacturers, data was captured through an Expression of Interest (EOI). This was followed by formations of commodity wise breakout-groups to discuss the feasibility of fortifying their respective staples.

Dr. Shalini Sehgal, Director (QA/Nutrition & Fortification), FSSAI, addressed the participants on the roles and responsibilities of FSSAI to create an enabling environment for food fortification. She also highlighted the importance of the regional workshops, which aim to align demand and supply by bringing together relevant stakeholders.

The panel of dignitaries representing various State departments showcased the status of food fortification in their respective States. Shri Shreeman Shukla, IAS, Commissioner, Department of Food and Civil Supplies, Madhya Pradesh, shared his experience of implementing double fortified salt in PDS in 89 tribal blocks across 20 districts, as well as the strategy and challenges faced. He also shared the importance of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns for sensitizing the most vulnerable target groups for the success of a new intervention. Following this, the State conceived the idea of a young tribal girl named 'Laali' to create awareness. Dr. Sandhya Vyas, Joint Director, ICDS, Madhya Pradesh, discussed in-depth the various components of the Programme, wherein she also spoke about the renowned Sanjha Chulha Programme. Dr. Manju Yadav, Assistant Director, ICDS, Rajasthan, discussed briefly the good practices being followed by the Department to facilitate the supply of fortified edible oil, and wheat flour to the beneficiaries.

Ms. Dipika Chauhan, Deputy Commissioner, FDA, Gujarat, showcased the progress of the State in SNPs. She also acknowledged Akshaya Patra for using double fortified salt (DFS), fortified wheat flour and fortified edible oil in its meals since the last two years. In collaboration with various development partners, rice fortification has also been initiated in MDM. Shri G. Udaya Kumar, FNB Department, New Delhi, spoke about the support being extended by Ministry of Women and Child Development, for creating awareness at the ground-level on food fortification. The Department's Orientation Training Programme encourages face-to-face interaction with the community through its 43 Community Nutrition Extension Field Units across the country. The trainees include Anganwadi Workers, ASHA helpers, adolescent girls, and pregnant & lactating women.

Industry representatives from Maahi, and Ankur Chem Food Pvt. Ltd., shared their success stories on implementation of fortified variants of milk and DFS, respectively, since the last few years.

The teams from FFRC, FSSAI and TATA Trusts provided insights into standards, regulations, quality assurance, technical and communication support extended to both industry and government. All the participants were awarded a certificate of appreciation for their efforts in catalyzing food fortification in India.