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Govt officials discuss rice fortification status to address nutritional anaemia

The Department of Food and Public Distribution under Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Ministry of Women and Child Development jointly organised a webinar on 'Rice Fortification: A complementary approach to address Nutritional

By **Manbeena Chawla** | September 10, 2021



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Several countries have learnt from India and are now pursuing fortified rice in the open market: said Bishow Parajuli, World Food Programme

The Department of Food and Public Distribution under Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Ministry of Women and Child Development jointly organised a webinar on 'Rice Fortification: A complementary approach to address Nutritional Anaemia' with technical support of the World Food Programme on 10 September.

The Secretary, Department of Food and Public Distribution, Sudhanshu Pandey in his keynote address said "It's a momentous time in the Public Distribution history that such a major decision has been taken."

"I am particularly happy that Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) and the Department of School Education & Literacy are looking to the vulnerability of children and students. They took decision to supply fortified rice for their Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) programmes and Mid-Day Meal Programmes from 1st of April this year. As a result of which, we got an opportunity to work through an entire ecosystem of rice fortification and prepare ourselves to something which was much bigger", he said.

Dr. Shariqua Yunus, Head, Nutrition and School Feeding Unit, World Food Programme (WFP) while talking about 'Rice Fortification: Concept and process' said that anemia continues to be a problem in the country. "Over last 10 years, the reduction in prevalence of anemia is slightly less than expected," said claiming that fortified rice is the most sustainable solution to the health issues.

Pertinently, 7 States have already started the distribution of fortified rice. Approx. 2.47 Lakh MT of fortified rice is distributed till August 2021 under the pilot scheme. Production of Fortified Rice Kernels (FRK) is increased from 7250 MT in 2018 to around 60,000 MT yearly. (additional 25,000 – 30,000MT/year is also in the pipeline)

Nearly 3100 Rice mills have installed blending unit in 15 Key States with cumulative monthly blending capacity of around 18.0 Lakh MT for production of fortified rice. Standards have been established for fortified rice through regulatory agency such as Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Similarly, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has been requested to come out with a standard for extruder and blending machines for fortified rice production for

uniformity.

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