

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2173
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.08.2023**

**“CONSUMPTION OF IRON-FORTIFIED RICE AMONG SICKLE CELL
ANAEMIA PATIENTS”**

2173 SHRI MOHAMMED NADIMUL HAQUE:

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state

- a. whether it is a fact that consumption of iron-fortified rice is not advisable among Sickle Cell Anaemia (SCA) patients;
- b. whether Government has taken adequate measures to ensure that SCA patients do not consume iron- fortified rice sold through fair-price shops, if so, the details thereof;
- c. if not, the reasons therefor;
- d. whether Government has apart from the usage of warning labels, taken additional steps to ensure that tribal patients who heavily depend on fair price shops for their ration do not purchase iron-fortified rice, if so, the details and alternatives thereof; and
- e. if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY
WELFARE
(PROF. S. P. SINGH BAGHEL)**

(a) to (e): The data on iron status varies significantly in different studies performed in India. Iron deficiency varies from 28-67% where as iron overload has been also reported in 28.9%-80% of the patients. Iron fortified rice is likely to be harmful for patients in whom there is already iron overload. However this has not been supported by any study. Sickle Cell Diseased (SCD) patients must consult treating doctor before consuming iron- fortified food.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) issued Gazette Notification dated 03-08-2018 and dated 31-08-2021 on food fortification. Sub regulations (4) of regulations (7) mentions "Every package of food, fortified with Iron shall carry a statement -People with Thalassemia may take under medical supervision and persons with Sickle Cell Anaemia advised not to consume iron fortified food products." Department of Food and Public Distribution has circulated the amended notification vide letter dated 13-07-2022 to Principal Secretaries/Secretaries of all States/UTs and Chairman and Managing Director of FCI, requesting them to refer and strictly comply to FSSAI's Gazette Notification on food fortification dated 31.08.2021 .
