

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1641
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10TH DECEMBER, 2024

FORTIFICATION OF RICE

1641 **SMT. PHULO DEVI NETAM:**

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether fortified rice distributed through the Public Distribution System includes a health warning;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the list of all studies and reports commissioned or conducted by Government on the long-term health effects and associated risks of consuming fortified rice; and
- (d) the key recommendations provided in each of these studies or reports, particularly regarding potential health risks for different population groups?

A N S W E R
MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS,
FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRIMATI NIMUBEN JAYANTIBHAI BAMBHANIYA)

(a) & (b): The Packaging and labeling instructions are in accordance with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)'s notified Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018, and its subsequent amendments.

FSSAI, vide Gazette Notification dated 02.08.2018 and its amendment dated 27.08.2021, had issued packaging and labelling instructions for iron-fortified food, including an advisory for individuals with thalassemia and sickle cell anemia. However, FSSAI has notified a draft amendment to the Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018 omitting this advisory, and the same was operationalized on 19.07.2024.

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(c) & (d): NITI Aayog has constituted a Core Committee to monitor the impact evaluation of the Rice Fortification Initiative. NITI Aayog and Indian Council of Medical Research- National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) have taken up study in six districts in six different states of the country to evaluate the impacts of iron fortified rice supplied through the Public Distribution Systems in India. The study includes all age groups, employs a time-series, repeat cross-sectional design and covers approximately 10,000 individuals.

Additionally, The State Government of Uttar Pradesh, with the support from the United Nations World Food Programme, conducted an efficacy and effectiveness study on rice fortification in *Chandauli* district. The study showed a significant 7.5 % point reduction in anemia prevalence among the children (6-59 months) after the introduction of rice fortification, with rates decreasing from 65.7% (baseline: National Family Health Survey-5, Jan. 2021) to 58.2% (endline: July-August 2023).

In addition, ICMR-NIN, Hyderabad also conducted a review of literature and found that there is a limited evidence of transient adverse effects among participants consuming iron fortified rice. Another notable finding is that considering the level of iron fortification in rice in India, the total iron intake through fortified rice is less than 0.59 mg/kg/day for any age group, which is well within the normal daily iron requirement.
