

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.4269
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26TH MARCH, 2025

FORTIFICATION OF GRAINS, CEREALS AND PULSES

4269. SHRI C N ANNADURAI:
SHRI NAVASKANI K:
SHRI SELVAM G:

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

- (a) whether the Government is providing fortified grains, cereals and pulses through the Public Distribution System (PDS);
- (b) if so, the details of the fortified food variants being supplied including the types of nutrients added;
- (c) the States and Union Territories where fortified grains, cereals and pulses are currently being distributed through PDS;
- (d) the standards followed for fortification of grains, cereals and pulses supplied through PDS;
- (e) whether the Government conducts regular quality checks on fortified food items distributed through PDS and if so, the details of such quality control measures;
- (f) whether the distribution of fortified grains through PDS has led to a reduction in malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies;
- (g) if so, the details of such studies or reports assessing the impact of fortified food distribution; and
- (h) the steps taken by the Government to further improve the nutritional quality of food distributed under PDS?

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

(a) to (c): Under National Food Security Act (NFSA), only rice, wheat and coarse-grains are distributed through Public Distribution System (PDS). No other cereals and pulses are distributed through PDS under NFSA.

Further, to combat anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies, the Government of India is supplying fortified rice under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) of Central Government covering all States and Union Territories. The rice fortification process involves enriching rice with Iron, folic acid, and Vitamin B12 by blending custom-milled rice with fortified rice kernels (FRK) at 1% by weight.

(d): Rice Fortification Initiative adheres to the standards prescribed by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2018, and its subsequent amendments.

(e): Quality assessment inspections are conducted to ascertain the quality standards of central pool foodgrains stocks meant for distribution through PDS and OWS. Further, a Quality Control Manual has been formulated and issued in order to maintain the quality standards of foodgrains from procurement to its distribution to the eligible beneficiaries through various social security programmes of Government of India.

(f) & (g): 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 (Telangana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Assam) 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.

The study consists of baseline, midline and endline assessment at an interval of one year. Currently, the baseline survey data collection has been completed in all states, and data collection for the subsequent rounds will progress as per the study protocol.

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).

(h): Coarse-grains and six minor millets have been added in the PDS in addition to fortified-rice and wheat. States/UTs are encouraged to include coarse-grains/millets in the PDS, replacing a part of wheat/rice, with the aim to diversify the food basket.
