

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 6176
TO BE ANSWERED ON 1ST APRIL, 2026

FORTIFIED RICE

6176. SHRI T R BAALU:

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

- (a): whether it is a fact that Government has decided to stop distribution of fortified rice as it has been found to be not safe for consumption;
- (b): if so, the basis on which the Scheme of supply of fortified rice under Public Distribution System (PDS) was launched;
- (c): the details of total additional expenditure incurred in producing fortified rice so far; and
- (d): whether any alternate Schemes are being mulled in place fortified rice to achieve the intended health benefits to consumers and if so, the details thereof?

A N S W E R

MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS,
FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRIMATI NIMUBEN JAYANTIBHAI BAMBHANIYA)

(a): The temporary discontinuation of rice fortification under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) and Other Welfare Schemes was necessitated by a number of factors, including Stability and Shelf-life of fortified rice under actual storage conditions as established by a study by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur. Also, a formative research study by Indian Council of Medical Research - National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) identified that many beneficiaries mistake floating FRKs for contaminants, chaff or debris. This leads to the physical removal and discarding of the fortified kernels during pre-cooking, effectively negating the program's nutritional objectives.

(b): Fortification is a globally recognized practice, and India follows guidelines aligned with the World Health Organization (WHO). According to WHO's 2018 recommendations, rice fortification with iron is recommended in countries where rice is a staple food. In India, with 65% of its population consuming rice daily, iron-fortified rice is particularly relevant. Moreover, rice has the highest offtake in government food safety net programs, providing a unique opportunity to reach approximately 80 crore people, including women and children, efficiently.

Fortification of rice has been adopted as a complementary and mid term strategy to address iron deficiency anaemia along with other strategies under Anaemia Mukta Bharat initiative. A thorough inter-ministerial consultation with various stakeholders including NITI Aayog, FSSAI,

line Ministries (Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Department of School Education & Literacy) and other relevant organizations as well as the States/UTs were held during approval process of the rice fortification initiative.

On the basis of studies available in India and abroad; and also, the recommendation of FSSAI for mandatory rice fortification in India, the Government of India decided to scale-up the supply of fortified rice under Public Distribution System (PDS) and other food safety net programmes.

(c): For the implementation of Rice Fortification Initiative, the Government of India has allocated Rs.1323.38 Cr. for F.Y. 2022-23, Rs. 2679.47 Cr. for F.Y. 2023-24 and then extended the initiative at an annual financial implication of Rs.3796 Cr.

Food subsidy is released for distribution of foodgrains (Wheat, Rice and Coarse grains), no commodity wise food subsidy release is maintained by Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD). The total food subsidy released for distribution of foodgrains (including fortified rice) from F.Y. 2021-22 to 24.03.2026 is as under:

S. No.	Financial Year	Amount (in Rs. Crore)
1	2021-22	288718.54
2	2022-23	272501.69
3	2023-24	211394.39
4	2024-25	199499.67
5	2025-26 (as on 24.03.2026)	195747.05

(d): Government of India is emphasizing on enhancing the food basket by providing options such as Shree Anna or Millets through PDS, as millets are known to have very high nutrient contents. No other scheme to replace Rice Fortification Initiative is under consideration of Government at this time.
