

# Business Standard

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## FSSAI bats for adoption of fortified food in government schemes

Food safety regulator FSSAI, which is coming out with a draft regulation for standards on food fortification, on Friday advocated adoption of fortified food in government schemes.

Addressing the media here, FSSAI CEO Pawan Kumar Agarwal said the draft Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016, which provides guidelines on fortifying rice, milk, wheat flour, edible oil and salt will be made public during the two-day 'National Summit on Fortification of Food' beginning here on Sunday.

According to the draft regulations, fortification means "increasing the content of essential micro-nutrients in a food so as to improve the nutritional quality of food and to provide public health benefit with minimal risk to health".

"In government schemes like the mid-day meal, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) or the public distribution scheme, fortified food should be made mandatory. The government has been deliberating on the issue and I hope a decision can be taken soon," said Agarwal.

"The challenges of fortification are huge and the fortification standard regulation, which will be operationalised soon, will play a big role in addressing the issue of malnutrition," he said.

Agarwal, however, said the adoption of the fortification standard in the private sector could take longer.

Pointing to high prevalence of "micronutrient malnutrition" in the country, he enumerated FSSAI's 10 new initiatives to enhance and promote food safety and awareness about it.

## FSSAI IN NEWS

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The initiatives include a "Green Book" aimed at educating households about safe and nutritious food, collaborative efforts with food business to ensure food safety, encouraging food safety norms at work place and education institutions among others.

"At the summit, stakeholders including experts and government representatives will discuss and debate the importance of food fortification as well as effectively carrying on food fortification efforts," added Agarwal.

Besides the five items - rice, milk, wheat flour, edible oil and salt, Agarwal said the FSSAI was mulling introducing fortified standard for processed food.

Speaking on the occasion, Ajay Khera, Deputy Commissioner in the Union Health Ministry said the adoption of fortification standard can play a large role in countering malnutrition and anaemia.

"Nearly 50 percent of our child and adolescent population is anaemic. More than 85 countries across the globe had adopted fortified food standard. As such adoption of fortified food is the way forward to counter malnutrition and especially anaemia," he said.

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