

FOOD FORTIFICATION - CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF FOOD FORTIFICATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

India faces a serious public health challenge due to widespread micronutrient deficiencies, known as "hidden hunger." To address this, food fortification programs have been implemented, strategically adding essential vitamins and minerals to staple foods. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) spearheads this initiative, mandating fortification in wheat flour, rice, salt, milk, and edible oils. These fortified staples are enriched with iron, folic acid, vitamin A, vitamin D, and iodine. This approach offers significant advantages: regular consumption of fortified staples can substantially improve micronutrient intake, ensuring these essential nutrients reach a large portion of the population, including those dependent on government distribution programs. Moreover, fortification is cost-effective and minimally alters the taste, texture, or quality of the food. However, challenges persist. Effective blending of fortificants, especially at small-scale flour mills, requires refinement. Additionally, raising consumer awareness about the benefits of fortified foods is crucial to encourage their consumption. Overall, India's food fortification program represents a substantial step towards combating micronutrient deficiencies and improving public health. Continued efforts to enhance program implementation and raise consumer awareness are essential for its long-term success.

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