



Press Release

First Regional Workshop on Food Fortification – The First Wave *Sowing Fortified Saplings of Change*

Thiruvananthapuram, Thu, 30 May 2019: Over the last two years, Food Fortification has gained a sizeable traction in India. It is now established as one of the key interventions in government of India's major nutrition flagship programmes. States/UTs have adopted fortification across supplementary nutrition programmes namely ICDS, MDM and PDS. In open market as well, the availability of fortified brands is increasing with top and regional industry players taking proactive steps towards adoption of fortification.

In order to extend the benefits of fortification to all beneficiaries, by tracking the progress and understanding the challenges faced by the States and Industry, a series of eight regional, action-oriented workshops are being conducted by the Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC, FSSAI) jointly with Tata Trusts across the country.

The first workshop was conducted today in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala targeting the states of Kerala, Karnataka, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The day long workshop saw a participation by over 70 key stakeholders. The meetings will result in a country wide food fortification scoreboard which will support the adoption of fortification as a cost-effective, scalable and sustainable intervention to tackle micronutrient malnutrition at large. These workshops will culminate in the unveiling of the national fortification scoreboard.

It followed a unique format wherein the first half was dedicated to understanding the perspective of the State departments and identifying the gaps while the second half witnessed engagement with regional industries thereby aligning demand and supply.

Officials from respective State Food Safety Departments talked about the current status, challenges of fortification in their States and outlined the suggested way forward. One-on-one interaction through a working group model was conducted with the States to create an at-scale action plan for their respective states. Despite existing logistical constraints, the participating UTs of A&N Islands and Lakshadweep took a step forward in placing their respective territories on the fortification map and have committed to fortifying all their staple commodities. Positive results also emerged from the hands-on sessions for the States of Kerala and Karnataka where they have committed to fast-track the roll-out of fortification initiatives along with scaling it up.

During the second half, industry members were briefed about the fortification environment in the country. They were nudged to adopt fortification as per FSSAI's standards and were informed about the need and demand for the same. Their queries were addressed and they were assured that technical assistance and end-to-end support will be provided by



development partners to the industries for implementing food fortification. This was followed by formations of commodity wise breakout-groups to discuss the feasibility of fortifying their respective staples. The industry promised to initiate fortification shortly and provided a quantifiable assurance. Their commitment was displayed on a scoreboard and will be tracked going forward.

Mr Madhusudan Rao, Lead – Nutrition, TATA Trusts in his welcome address said that it was only together that this critical battle against micronutrient malnutrition can be won. Speaking at the workshop, Ms Nina Badgaiyan, Consultant, NITI Aayog nudged states to actively implement food fortification and talked about the need for a structured approach and a shared vision. In his keynote address Mr P. Muthumaran, Director, FSSAI, mentioned that FSSAI has taken a lead in providing an organized platform for food fortification and is ensuring co-creation of a positive nutrition environment through a cohesive plan of action. The teams from FFRC, FSSAI and TATA Trusts provided insights into standards, regulations, quality assurance, technical and communication support extended to both industry and government.

Through the first workshop, a window to convert existing problems into new opportunities emerged. All the participants were awarded a certificate of appreciation for their efforts in catalyzing food fortification in India.