

2. Rice Fortification

Prelims: Science & Technology- Biotechnology, Governance- Policies

Mains: GS-III- Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-Technology, Bio-Technology and issues relating to Intellectual Property Rights.

Why in News?

- ▶▶ The NITI Aayog seeks creation of roadmap by Department of Food and Public Distribution for taking the Rice Fortification Pilot Scheme Pan India to tackle the menace of Malnutrition.

Rice Fortification:

- ▶▶ Fortification is the practice of deliberately increasing the content of an essential micronutrient, i.e. vitamins and minerals (including trace elements) in a food, so as to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply and provide a public health benefit with minimal risk to health. Rice fortification is the practice of increasing the content of essential micronutrients in rice and to improve the nutritional quality of the rice.
- ▶▶ Fortified rice contains Vitamin A, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B12, Folic Acid, Iron and Zinc.

Benefits of Fortification:

- ▶▶ If consumed on a regular and frequent basis, fortified foods will maintain body stores of nutrients more efficiently and more effectively than will intermittent supplements.
- ▶▶ Fortified foods are also better at lowering the risk of the multiple deficiencies that can result from seasonal deficits in the food supply or a poor-quality diet.
- ▶▶ Fortification can be an excellent way of increasing the content of vitamins in breast milk and thus reducing the need for supplementation in postpartum women and infants.
- ▶▶ Fortification of widely distributed and widely consumed foods has the potential to improve the nutritional status of a large proportion of the population, both poor and wealthy.
- ▶▶ Fortification is often more cost-effective than other strategies, especially if the technology already exists and if an appropriate food distribution system is in place.

Food fortification in India:

- ▶▶ Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has formulated a comprehensive regulation on fortification of foods namely 'Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016'.

- ▶▶ These regulations set the standards for food fortification and encourage the production, manufacture, distribution, sale and consumption of fortified foods.
- ▶▶ The regulations also provide for specific role of FSSAI in promotion for food fortification and to make fortification mandatory. This sets the premise for the national summit on fortification of food.

