



Dated: 07.03.2018 (Wednesday)

Promoting food fortification for public health: MoS Health by IANS New Delhi, March 6 (IANS)

The government is encouraging enrichment of food items with micronutrients to remove dietary deficiencies among its citizens, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Ashwini Kumar Choubey said on Tuesday. "In order to promote fortification as a means to address micro nutrient deficiencies, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has operationalised the draft Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Foods) Regulations, 2016 in October 2016," he said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha. The regulations include provisions regarding standards for fortification of food articles namely wheat flour, rice, milk, edible oil and salt with vitamins and minerals, said the minister to a query on the laws for food fortification in the country. "At present, all the major oil producers in the country are voluntarily fortifying at least one brand in their product portfolios," he said. The FSSAI may from time to time mandate fortification of any food article under the regulations on the directions of the Central or the state governments in consultation with stakeholders, he added. The Women and Child Development Ministry and the Human Resource Development Ministry have advised the use of double fortified salt with iron and iodine, wheat flour with iron, folic acid and vitamin B-12, and edible oil with vitamin A and D under their Integrated Child Development Scheme and Mid-day Meal Scheme. Under Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations, 2011, sale of only iodized salt is permitted for direct human consumption. Further, Food

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Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011 provide that vanaspati should contain synthetic Vitamin A. Choubey said FSSAI has established Food Fortification Resource Centre in collaboration with Tata Trusts and various international NGOs working in the field of nutrition as a resource centre to promote large-scale fortification of food and to nudge and facilitate food businesses to adopt fortification as a norm.