

Aug 30, 2018,

Importance of food fortification highlighted

Chandigarh, August 29

A proposal on manual labelling to identify whether food is healthy or not so healthy in terms of salt, sugar and saturated fat content is pending with the government for approval. This was stated by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) CEO Pawan Agarwal during the first-ever workshop on “Eat Right Movement” organised for the awareness regarding the importance of food fortification in the city on Wednesday.

“There are some concerns raised by a few people about food fortification, but such people are very small in number,” Agarwal told reporters here at a press conference. The initiative is being organised in collaboration with the World Bank by the FSSAI. Food fortification is the addition of key vitamins and minerals such as iron, iodine, Vitamin A and D, etc., to staple foods such as wheat flour, rice, vegetable oil, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content.

Other health and nutrition-related interventions such as importance of nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life were also covered.

As per National Family Health Survey (NHFS) – IV, almost 76 per cent of the female population in Chandigarh suffers from anaemia – the second highest among all states and UTs. Also, prevalence of anaemia in children (age 6 to 59 months) at 73 per cent is the highest in Chandigarh among all northern states. Food fortification is a complementary strategy to fight micronutrient deficiencies such as anaemia.

The standards provide a range of dosage, which aims at providing 30-50 per cent of the daily recommended dietary allowance (RDA) of the nutrients.

Sharing the details, the FSSAI shared Chandigarh has voluntarily started rice fortification through its ICDS and MDM programmes, which cater to approximately 1 lakh beneficiaries. Haryana has introduced fortified wheat flour in its ICDS and PDS programmes as well as fortified vegetable oil in ICDS, MDM and PDS programmes, voluntarily. Punjab is also geared up to introduce fortified foods in its safety net programmes.

KS Pannu, Secretary, Agriculture, and Commissioner of Food Safety, Punjab; BL Sharma, Secretary, Education, Social Welfare, Women & Child Development, UT; and Dr G Dewan, Director, UT Health Services, were also present on the occasion. — TNS