



Milk fortification to tackle malnutrition in India

While inaugurating a workshop on “Sustaining Efforts of Milk Fortification in India” at National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), Anand on 7 June 2019, Shri Dilip Rath, Chairman, NDDB said that Vitamin A & D deficiencies are widely prevalent in India. Fortification of appropriate foods with Vitamin A and D is a viable strategy to tackle micronutrient malnutrition.

Shri Rajan Sankar, Director, The India Nutrition Initiative (TINI); Dr Edward W Bresnyan, Senior Agricultural Economist, World Bank; Shri Madhusudan Rao, Nutrition Lead, Tata Trusts; Shri Vivek Arora, Sr Advisor, Tata Trusts; Dr RK Marwaha, Member of scientific panel, FSSAI; Dr CS Pandav, Member, National Council for India’s Nutritional Challenges, Poshan Abhiyan graced the occasion.

In his address, Shri Rath conveyed that micronutrient deficiencies are widespread and currently, affecting about 2 billion people in the world - accounting for nearly 10% of the global health burden. More specifically to India, micronutrient malnutrition is a silent emergency. As per WHO & UNICEF 2009 reports, the nation bears the burden of more than a quarter of the world’s vitamin A deficient preschool children and more than



13 million susceptible infants to iodine deficiency. According to National Family Health Survey-4 data, among children under 5 years in India, 38.4% are stunted, 21% are wasted and 35.7% are underweight. Micronutrient deficiencies such as iron, folic acid, vitamin B12, zinc and vitamin D are very prevalent and have overwhelming impact over the public health and economic productivity of the nation. The most powerful solution to combat this challenge is food fortification.

Chairman, NDDB said that milk in India, with its high volume of production, widespread distribution network, affordability and all around acceptability in the daily food habit has emerged as the best vehicle for fortification. We are world’s largest milk producing country and our per capita milk availability has now increased to 375 grams per day. Milk fortification is highly affordable and cost effective, as it costs less than 2 to 3 paise per litre.

Dr Bresnyan mentioned that the South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative (SAFANSI) seeks to address the South Asian Enigma - how chronic malnutrition remains intractable despite high economic growth - by fostering the crosscutting actions that will lead to measurable improvements in food and nutrition security. He strongly

