

Category	: International Rice Research Conference
Select Theme	: Pathways to health and nutrition
Endorsement email	:
Keyword 1	: Nutrient-dense rice
Keyword 2	: Nutrition security
Keyword 3	: Community interventions
Title of Entry	: Scaling-up rice fortification improves health status in Bangladesh
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Select only one type of presentation	: 15 minute oral presentation

Abstract : Through the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Programme, the Government of Bangladesh annually distributes 360,000 metric tons of rice to one million vulnerable women, benefiting about five million poor and vulnerable people. Among them, half a million people received fortified rice in 2017 and it is expected that over one million will be reached in 2018 under various Government safety net programmes. In 2013, an acceptability study confirmed suitability of fortifying rice for Bangladesh and paved the way to initiate introduction of fortified rice in the country. An effectiveness study was commissioned by the World Food Programme at the request of Government, to assess whether consumption of fortified rice by women under the VGD programme indeed had a discernable effect on their micronutrient status and morbidity. The baseline survey among 870 respondents started in December 2014 and the endline survey among 1,200 respondents took place two years later. The effectiveness study, conducted in five districts of Bangladesh, showed that consuming fortified rice for one year had had a positive impact on the micronutrient status. The anaemia status of the group consuming fortified rice had improved by 4.8%, whereas in the control group anaemia had deteriorated by 6.7%. Zinc deficiency in the intervention group decreased by 6%, against no change in the control group. The vitamin A status, which was only measured during the endline, was 2.5% in the intervention group and 3% in the control group. Moreover, the intervention group showed a significantly lower morbidity (diarrhea and fever). The positive result of the study led to the confirmation of Government resources to further expand distribution of fortified rice through various social safety nets. WFP and partners will further support accessibility to vulnerable consumers in general, as well as contribute to strengthening capacity including on quality control to enable availability of fortified rice available in commercial markets at an affordable price. In Bangladesh, vitamin and mineral deficiencies adversely affect roughly one-quarter of the Bangladesh population, especially vulnerable people. The National Strategy on Micronutrient prevention and Control recognises rice fortification with multiple micronutrients as one of the interventions to address such micronutrient deficiencies.

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