



"Iodized Salt Journey" in Bangladesh to Assist in Lowering the Burden of Iodine Deficiency

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Key Messages:

- The availability of iodized salt in households remains low in Bangladesh, which calls for improving the salt iodization quality and its coverage. Needs to assess the socio-economic disparity in Bangladesh to characterize the availability of iodized salt at **household level**.
- This **policy brief** will be an effective tool in ensuring all **edible salt including salt used for livestock and the production of processed food items** for human consumption, will be iodized as BSTI standard level at **30-50 parts per million (ppm)** at the production level, benefitting millions of people who do not currently have access to adequately iodized salt.
- Overcoming this scenario requires interventions along the supply chain. Actions are needed from both **government and private sector** for instance to apply new salt law and its effective implementation.
- Additionally, it is an opportunity to prevent anemia and birth defects to introduce **double**

Iodine Functionality in Human Body:

While the nutrition situation in Bangladesh has improved over the last few decades, micronutrient deficiencies or hidden hunger prevails, with Iodine deficiency is highly prevalent. Iodine is essential in our diet to ensure proper functioning of the thyroid gland which is located in our neck. The thyroid gland uses iodine to produce thyroid hormones which is responsible for growth, brain development and to regulate metabolism. Iodine deficiency can lead to thyroid disease such as goitre or hypothyroidism and impair brain development¹. Pregnant and breastfeeding women need more iodine to support the brain development of their growing babies¹.

Iodine Deficiency Status in Bangladesh:

The most recent Bangladesh National Salt Iodization Survey (NSIS) of 2015 showed that only 50.5% households in Bangladesh have access to adequately iodized salt, whereas only 65.0% households have access to any iodized salt². Although the scenario has not changed much in adequate iodized salt coverage, there is a notable decrease in level of some iodized salt coverage over the years, which is alarming.

According to National Micronutrient Survey 2011-12, Overall iodine deficiency in NPWL women is: 32.5% and overall iodine deficiency in children 36.5%³. According to the National Micronutrient Survey (NMS) 2019-20 in Bangladesh, iodine deficiency rates were 19.7% in children and 29.6% in women.

Salt production Status in Bangladesh:

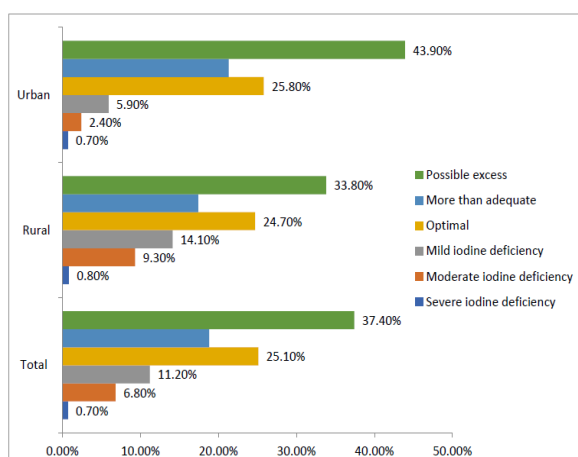
According to the BSCIC, salt production stood at 22.52 lakh tons in the current fiscal year. In the current salt season, the total amount of salt was cultivated in 69,198 acres of land, last year it was 66,424 acres. Compared to last year, this year salt farming land has increased by 2,774 acres. In the current salt season, the number of salt farmers is 41,355, which was 39,467 last year. A total number of 1,888 farmers has been increased in this sector, which is surely a great achievement in Salt Production in Bangladesh.

Significance of Salt Iodization (as stated in National Policy):

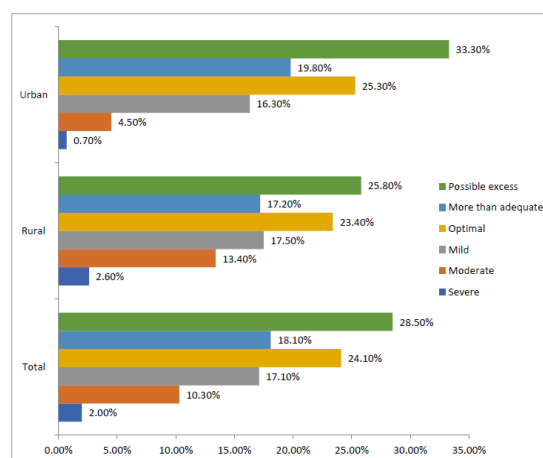
The government passed the Protection Law of Disease Caused by Lack of Iodine, also known as the "Act on the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (CIDD)." The legislation states that any salt intended for human consumption must include between 45 and 50 parts per million of iodine at the time of manufacturing and between 15 and 20 parts per million at the point of purchase. It also forbids the production, distribution, marketing, and sale of non-iodized salt. This will guarantee that household iodine levels are at least 15 ppm.

Overcome the challenges:

The salt law and clear guidance on enforcement of its regulations, along with local awareness campaigns, could improve the situation. Possible interventions regarding salt iodization should be conducted considering the district-level variations.¹ Prevalence of Iodine Deficiency according to NMS 2019-20.



For Children aged 6-59 months



For NPWL (15-49 years) women

Iodized salt intervention should be promoted considering the area variations, which could potentially help policy makers to design interventions in the context of Bangladesh. The new salt law as well as the proper guidance on enforcement of the regulations for violating it could be potential for changing such iodine deficiency scenario.

Key Policy Asks:

To Improve the iodization process, technology and internal quality control. Establishment of a viable cost recovery system through revolving fund mechanisms of total supply chain. Identification of the best performing salt processors and the recognition of these processors at the national level to boost their morale and brand interest also improvement in the industrial processes and technology including the up-gradation of salt plants.



Target Achievement: Proper utilization of the new salt law “Iodized Salt Law 2021” with new salt rules “Iodized Salt Rules 2024”, greater availability of quality product at a reasonable price and extensive awareness campaigns should contribute to achieve at least 90% food salt iodization by 2030.



Requisition: Government, private sector stakeholders, development partners and consumer groups must actively support for the Iodized salt production, process, and brand as a nutritionally enriched product in the market, differentiated and desirable to consumers.



Call to Action: Monitoring and QC/QA, need more improvement of enabling environment, capacity building of the government quality control authorities in effective monitoring, quality control and enforcement, boost the capacity of small and medium-scale salt producers, multisectoral coordination and participation.



Innovation: To prevent the high prevalence of Folate deficiency and neural tube defects in Bangladesh, introduce the double fortification of salt that could be fortified with Iodine and Folate

References:

1. https://nutritionfoundation.org.nz/nutrition-facts/nutrients/minerals/iodine/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw6cKiBhD5ARIsAKXUdyZ2DxQzvhuZYnUX-IQmq_Qa96uXk9Rys9GKFvrt5bDGMdP_XHFCdVwaAvx0EALw_wcB
2. International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh (2015) National Salt Iodization Survey, Bangladesh 2015: Summary Report. Dhaka: Centre for Nutrition and Food Security, icddr.
3. National Micronutrient Status Survey 2011-12
4. National Micronutrient Survey 2019-20