Child Development Services (ICDS) and Public Distribution System (PDS). FSSAI will carry out the exercise in collaboration with the Union ministry of women and child development.

“The panel will identify critical nutritional gaps in the Indian diet in general as well as in specific target groups based on diet surveys and credible scientific evidence, define strategies to address nutritional needs of the general population and vulnerable groups, and review the standards for all suitable food fortifying vehicles, in addition to the healthy dietary intake of fat, sugar & salt,” FSSAI said in a statement.

The panel will also address regulatory and related technological issues, review proposals from industry using modern risk assessment methods, and prescribe standard sampling and test methods for effective monitoring, surveillance and enforcement of the relevant regulations, according to the FSSAI statement.

The 11-member scientific panel, along with other scientists currently working on fortification of wheat flour, refined flour, rice, milk, edible oil and salt, will work with the ministries of women & child development, health & family welfare, department of biotechnology and the Indian Council of Medical Research.

The food regulator had said it targets to make use of fortified wheat flour, fortified edible oil and double fortified iodised salt mandatory for mid-day meals by December 2019 while the same will be made mandatory in the PDS by January 2020.

Fortification is a process to add essential micronutrients like vitamins and iron to food grains or commodities.

Last month, FSSAI had set standards for fortified rice, wheat flour, milk, edible oil and salt.
Safe food education on FSSAI menu

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has now decided to take on a new task of an educator.

As part of its integrated programme to promote safe and nutritious food at various levels, the FSSAI is running a pilot project to train domestic workers.

Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI, said that as part of the various citizen outreach programmes, FSSAI is running a pilot programme in collaboration with the Domestic Sector Skill Council and resident welfare associations at New Moti Bagh (New Delhi) to train domestic workers to make them aware about practices that need to be adopted for safe, hygienic and nutritious food at home.

“This is one of the pilot projects that have been launched to empower citizens and promote awareness and education about food safety. We want to integrate our programme with the everyday lives of people,” Agarwal said.

FSSAI last year had launched an integrated programme called “10@10” initiatives to promote food safety at home, schools, workplaces, places of worship, street food vendors among others.
The regulator hopes learning from this pilot will help develop a scalable model of training and educating domestic workers which can be expanded to other regions of the country. This initiative is being undertaken under the aegis of the PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana under Skill India.

Manish Kumar, Managing Director and CEO, National Skill Development, told *BusinessLine* that, “We have had RPL (recognition of prior learning) courses for street vendors and domestic maids on how to maintain hygiene in food.”

He said this work is being done in collaboration with its partner agencies.

Besides this pilot, FSSAI has also been working with various experts to develop books and e-learning materials that will educate citizens about simple tests that they can conduct to check on adulterants for some of the commonly used ingredients.

“We want food safety and nutrition to become a social movement that is not just driven by the regulator but all the stakeholders including citizens,” Agarwal added.

Food safety and nutrition education and training can also be gained through FSSAI’s FoSTaC (Food Safety and Training) Portal as well.