

## PRESS RELEASE

# Efforts to solve hunger among 289 million children hungry as CGSI brainstorms solutions to undernourishment

The battle against malnutrition and undernourishment received an enthusiastic boost at "A Drive Against Malnutrition" organized by CGSI in association with CII-Face, Consumer Voice, and Gain. The event took place at the Nirmala Niketan Seminar Hall and saw a number of industry experts and officials from varied fields of nutrition and food technology put forth their views and action plans to battle this epidemic.

**Joint Commissioner, FDA, Maharashtra, Mr Suresh Annapure** spoke from his experience as a food technologist. "As per government rules, fortification is already mandatory which should help eliminate malnourishment. But where are these so called results. There should be an economic, social and political responsibility from a wide range of individuals in the industry. In Madhya Pradesh the industry driven fortification of food oil and vanaspathi was made mandatory and after reviewing the results there are visible improvements in micronutrient profiles. Thus industry leaders and private sectors must take an active effort to reduce malnourishment rates."

Malnourishment among children can stunt their mental and physical growth. Nearly 57% of the children suffer from a vitamin A deficiency and preschool children are dealt the worst cards with 65.3% of them suffering from a Vitamin A deficiency. When the odds are on that side of growth, claims of a divided demographic that will increase productivity are all just whims. With iron and Vitamin A deficiencies prevalent among pregnant mothers and young children. The child enters the world timidly on the back foot of a normal life.

Fortification of oil and other food allow an inexpensive and efficient method to dealing with this crisis. The experts spoke about raising awareness of the need for fortification at a ground level. Equipping rural India with the knowledge of a balanced diet, sufficient with essential micronutrient to support growth is necessary.

On CGSI's initiative to carry out this drive, **Dr Sitaram Dixit**, CGSI Chairman says "As an organization catering to solving consumer griefs, we strive to continue to alleviate those who need a helping hand. Bringing together the experts in related fields we are positive we can merge technology and goodwill and put a cap on the alarming rise of undernourishment in India."

**Mr Ashim Sanyal**, COO of Consumer Voice said " Fortification of food involves equipping the staple diet with necessary micronutrients. India must catch up with food fortification as our counterparts have already implemented it with great success. In a proactive state like Maharashtra with organisations such as CGSI immediate steps must be taken by industries to not only implement fortification but follow up on its results and document the data".

Ms. Deepti Gulati ,Manager,GAIN gave an informative presentation on the need for immediate action to be taken on food fortification of staple diet in India as a challenge to combat malnutrition.

CGSI, the pioneer consumer organization founded in 1966 has been working for the protection of consumer interests since last so many decades. Its Consumer Complaints Redressal Wing receives plenty of grievances from consumers which the legal aid arm addresses on a weekly basis. This week, CGSI's weekly legal aid session held at their office near Cama Hospital, Mumbai received many complaints and Dr. M.S. Kamath, Hon. Secretary, CGSI addressed the problems of the consumers with help from volunteers