

Business Standard

Dated: 17.03.2018 (Saturday)

E-Paper

FSSAI seeks views on plastic particles or micro-plastics in water bottles

An international study said popular brands were selling contaminated mineral water bottles

Viveat Susan Pinto

March 17, 2018



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An international study on Thursday said popular brands were selling [contaminated mineral water bottles](#). The study by the State University of New York found twice as many plastic particles or micro-plastics in bottled water. Now, India's apex food regulator is consulting a scientific panel to understand the implications of the study. The study also prompted the [WHO](#) to take cognizance. On Friday, the [WHO](#) said it would review the risks of plastic contamination as governments across the world clamp down on plastic usage across industries.

Speaking to Business Standard, Pawan Kumar Agarwal, chief executive officer of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), said Indian bottled water standards focused on contamination caused by pesticides and micro-organisms. "There are no parameters to test for micro-plastics," he said. "We need to understand this issue in greater detail before we can devise new standards or update existing ones."

Ramesh Chauhan, chairman and managing director, [Bisleri](#) International, whose brand [Bisleri](#) was named in the study, said: "I don't understand what tests have been

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conducted to arrive at this conclusion. Indian standards as well as scientific laboratories here do not conduct tests for micro-plastics in bottled water.

So I don't know the basis of this study." He said [Bisleri](#) met Indian bottled water standards. The study also named brands such Aquafina from PepsiCo, Dasani from Coca-Cola, Evian and Aqua from Danone and [Nestlé Pure Life](#) and [Pellegrino from Nestlé](#). Scientists, [who](#) worked for the study, said they tested some 259 samples from nine countries, including India, China, US and Brazil, to find that over 90 per cent of the samples had plastic particles in them, which included polypropylene, nylon and [polyethylene terephthalate](#) (PET). [PET](#) is widely used in the beverage industry for bottling and packaging. However, health experts have frequently cautioned about the health risks attached with excessive use of plastic.

When contacted, PepsiCo India said it maintained rigorous quality control measures when bottling water and other beverages. "The science on micro-plastics and micro-fibers is an emerging field. It is in its infancy, which requires further scientific analysis, peer-reviewed research and greater collaboration across stakeholders. Micro-plastic particles may also be created from innumerable sources and are found across our environment – including the soil, air and water," a PepsiCo India spokesperson said. While Coca-Cola's Kinley bottled water brand was not named in the study, the company said: "We have some of the most stringent quality standards in the industry, and the water we use in all our beverages is subject to multi-step filtration processes prior to production. We stand by the safety of our products, and welcome continued study of plastics in our environment."