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As Kodai season peaks, food safety under lens

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Kodaikanal: With the sweltering heat beating down on the plains and educational institutions closed for vacation, tourist flow to Kodaikanal hills has been peaking of late. Quite understandably, hoteliers, the main beneficiaries of the tourist inflow, are upbeat, yet some of them have been indulging in unfair practices much to the detriment of the guests.

A tourist from Dharapuram in Tirupur district, who visited the town on Saturday, had a bad experience when the sambar provided to him for the vegetarian meal was found to be stale. As he did not get a proper response when he raised the issue with the hotel owner, he called up the designated officer for food safety for Dindigul district, Dr K Natarajan, who in turn alerted the local food safety officer Kannan.

The officer who reached the restaurant confirmed that about 5 litres of sambar at the Al Arab hotel on Laws Ghat Road, located opposite to Kodaikanal government hospital, was spoiled. He immediately disposed of the sambar and issued a stringent warning to the hotelier. Samples of the food served in the hotel have also been sent to a laboratory for testing. Many hotels were found to have served bad quality food to tourists in the past too.

Although many tourists leave the town literally with a bad taste in their mouth, hardly anyone bothers to raise a complaint. Dr Natarajan told TOI that they will be cracking down on eateries and restaurants in the famed tourist destination and it will be ensured that safe and quality food is served to customers. He also urged tourists to inform them about the quality of food items served through the statewide WhatsApp number 9444042322.