

FSSAI lifts tea, coffee decoction samples to check adulteration

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FSSAI has put tea and coffee decoction samples under a strict scanner to check adulteration. S. Siva Saravanan | Photo Credit: S. Siva Saravanan

‘Test conducted at the food laboratory did not find presence of any adulterants’

After repeated checks to counter adulteration in tea dust, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is currently examining samples of tea and coffee decoction.

The FSSAI had received a complaint from a city resident who wanted the food regulator to check whether any artificial agent was added in coffee served in some outlets to create addiction.

Designated officer of the FSSAI in Coimbatore B. Vijayalalithambigai said that samples of tea and coffee decoction were lifted in surprise visits to check possible adulteration.

“Samples of coffee decoction randomly collected and tested at the food laboratory did not find the presence of any adulterants.

Samples of tea decoction were lifted from shops and restaurants in two batches. They are currently under laboratory examination,” she said.

Unlike in coffee, use of adulterants were found more in low quality tea dust in the past in Coimbatore. The main adulterant used is artificial agents which emit colour and give strong colour to the beverage.

“Low quality tea dust mixed with colouring agent was found in use as it can be used for making more quantity of tea. The price is also cheap. As food safety officials often inspect shops and check the quality of tea dust using the spot testing method, stocking of adulterated tea dust has come down. We lifted decoction samples for examination following specific information that adulterant is mixed separately while making the decoction,” said Dr. Vijayalalithambigai.

Some of the tea stalls which were found using adulterated tea dust in the past have now stopped the practice after seizure of the product and warnings issued by FSSAI.

They were selling tea at cheap rates as low as ₹ 5 which would not be economically viable for the seller if quality tea dust was used. Such shops have now increased the rate of tea after they started using quality tea dust.