No formalin found in fresh samples: officials

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Warn of action against use of chemicals

A day after The Hindu published a report that 11 samples of fish tested positive for formalin, the State Fisheries Department and the Food Safety Department swung into action, testing samples sold across markets. The Food Safety Department directed district officers and food safety officers to inspect fish markets and stalls, and give instructions to the vendors to not use harmful chemicals or formalin. Officials have been asked to issue warnings that if they are found using such chemicals, severe action would be taken against vendors and traders alike.

Both the departments together lifted 24 samples from the Kasimedu, Chintadripet and Saidapet markets but they all tested negative for formalin, officials claimed. They used the same kit prepared by the Tamil Nadu Dr. J. Jayalalithaa Fisheries University.

Meanwhile, fishermen of Kasimedu have expressed worry over the fish testing positive for formalin. "Perhaps, a section of the sea is contaminated from where these fish were caught. All the varieties tested as per The Hindu report are fish that are found at the bottom of the sea. Fishermen would normally not indulge in any funny business (like injecting formalin) since this is food that they also consume," said Nanjil Ravi of the Akhil Indhiya Meenavar Sangam.

Fishermen said they had received calls from customers asking if fish at Kasimedu was safe to consume. "We are just recovering from the oil spill and hope this would be a good season for fishing as well as sales. Such acts of using chemicals have to be condemned and the culprits booked," Vinoth, a firsherman, said.

For consumers such as Mothi Chandrika of Gopalapuram, the question was whether they could visually make out if fish were contaminated before buying them. "Buyers cannot have the fish tested everytime before a purchase. The State government must ensure that the fish is safe for all to consume," she added.