

Microplastics contamination in bottled water not alarming: FSSAI

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on Friday said the findings of a US-based NGO about microplastics contamination in bottled water in India were not alarming as there was no known health hazards due to it. "We have read and discussed the report about the contamination of microplastic in bottled water. Prima facie, there is nothing alarming in it as the residue level is just 0.1 ppb (parts per billion). There are no known health hazards linked to it," FSSAI CEO Pawan Kumar Agarwal told IANS.

The report, led by Orb Media, a US-based non-profit, revealed widespread contamination with plastic debris including polypropylene, nylon, and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) in 90 per cent of water bottle from leading brands including India.

Agarwal said the amount was "miniscule" like "one tenth of sugar cube in a shipping container".

Plastic residues were found in tap water as well due to factors like air, environment due to its presence all over world. No food safety authorities in the advanced countries including FCA, or EUFA have set residue level for microplastic or microfibre, he said.

However, the FSSAI would seek scientific opinion in order to check if preventive and corrective measures were needed to address concerns among people, Agarwal said.

Including India, the samples came from 19 locations in nine countries in five continents besides Brazil, China, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Thailand, and the US.

Plastic was identified in 93 per cent of the samples. Particle concentration ranged from zero to more than 10,000 in a single bottle.