

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.803  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2024**

**USE OF FORMALIN IN FISHERY PRODUCTS**

**803. SHRI DILESHWAR KAMAIT:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the reports from various parts of the country that toxic preservatives such as formalin are being used in fish and fishery products in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent the use of formalin and other toxic preservatives in fish and fishery products in this regard;
- (c) whether the use of formalin in food products can cause cancer and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the Government proposes to make available low cost detectors for use of public to determine traces of such harmful toxins in fish and other consumables and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY  
WELFARE  
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a) & (b): Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is fully committed to ensure the availability of safe food products to the consumers across the country. Towards this, FSSAI through State/UTs and its Regional Offices conducts regular surveillance, monitoring, inspection and random sampling of various food products including fish and fishery products to check compliance with the quality and safety parameters and other requirements as laid down under Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act, 2006, and regulations made thereunder.

As per the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives)

Regulation, 2011, Formaldehyde is not permitted for use as an additive or preservative in food products. However, formaldehyde is naturally present in some of the fish species and therefore, FSSAI has specified maximum limit of formaldehyde in such marine products. Fish and fishery products having formaldehyde limit beyond the specified limits, are non-compliant and penal action is taken against the defaulting Food Business Operators (FBOs) as per the provisions of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and its rules/regulations.

Further, in the Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011, the limits have also been specified for various contaminants, naturally occurring toxic substances, antibiotic residues, biotoxins in fish and fish products.

FSSAI has also issued a Guidance Note on “Issue of Formalin in Fish” for Consumers, FBOs and regulatory machinery. The guidance note specifies advice for consumers, food business operators and food testing laboratories on the best practices to avoid, restrict and detect formalin adulteration in fish.

(c): The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of World Health Organization (WHO) classifies formaldehyde as "carcinogenic to humans".

(d): Under the Guidance Note “Issue of Formalin in Fish”, a rapid kit, developed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)- Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (ICAR-CIFT), Kochi has been suggested for screening of free formaldehyde in fish. The method for such screening is simple, rapid and consumer friendly and detects only the added formaldehyde present in fish.

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