FSSAI to lift tea decoction samples to check adulteration

After repeated raids to curb use of adulterated tea dust, officials of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) have started lifting decoction samples from tea stalls to check for adulterants.

Earlier, FSSAI officials used to lift tea dust from provision shops, bakeries and tea stalls to examine use of adulterants.

Samples checked in previous years had revealed that tea dust lifted from some places were adulterated, primarily by adding artificial colours.

“While lifting adulterated tea dust from tea shops, the shop owners used to blame the trader. The trader at provision shops would point the finger at wholesale dealers. Based on a direction from headquarters, FSSAI is currently lifting samples of decoction from tea shops. If the samples are found adulterated in the laboratory examination, action will be taken against the tea shop owners,” said O.L.S. Vijay, Designated Officer, FSSAI, Coimbatore.

Dr. Vijay said that samples will also be lifted from Aavin milk booths where tea is sold and the samples lifted from some of the shops are currently being examined in a Government laboratory.

On Monday, FSSAI closed down a tea shop in Gandhipuram for repeated use of low quality adulterated tea dust. Officials said that all shops selling tea in Gandhipuram were taught to detect adulterated tea dust through a simple method.

“Tea dust mixed with colourants, when added to a glass of normal water, will release colour instantly. Whereas, pure tea dust will release colour only in warm water. We had demonstrated this experiment in all shops. As adulterated tea dust is cheap, they compromise on its ill-effects,” said K. Chandran, food safety officer for Gandhipuram area.