

12% of bottled water sold in Maharashtra of poor quality

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The common perception of packaged drinking water manufacturers flouting norms has come true. During 2010-11 and 2011-12, at least one in every 10 samples picked up for quality testing failed. The percentage of failing samples was higher in the Delhi-Noida region and Maharashtra and Goa combined.

In a written reply in the Lok Sabha last week, consumer affairs minister K V Thomas submitted details of samples collected from each state and Union territory. During 2010-11, 6,648 samples of packaged drinking water were taken and 805 of them failed. Government agencies also issued 543 warning letters to manufacturers for flouting norms.

BOTTLED TOXINS

Failed samples of bottled water	2010-11 (in %)	2011-12 (in %)	
Nationally	12	9	
In Delhi & Noida	12	20	
In Maharashtra & Goa	14	12	
	2010-11 30 licences for manufacturing bottled water cancelled	2011-12 32 licences cancelled/ not renewed	2012-13 190 licences cancelled



The data shows that at least 30 licences were cancelled.

In Delhi and Noida, 23 of the 190 samples failed and two licences were cancelled. In Maharashtra and Goa, 104 of 729 samples (14%) failed.

Though state govern-

ments issue permission to set up water bottling plants, the Bureau of Indian Standards grants product licence. It has the mandate to ensure quality of both packaged drinking water and packaged mineral water.

According to government data, during 2011-12, out of 7,732 samples of packaged drinking water, 720 failed the test. In Delhi and Noida, around 20% of samples were found flouting norms. Similarly, in Maharashtra and Goa, 123 of 989 samples (12%) failed the test. During the period, 547 warning letters were issued to manufacturers and 32 licences were cancelled or not renewed.

However, there was some correction during the last financial year with 8% of samples failing tests. In fact, almost every state reported better results as the number of failed samples was only 607 out of 7,456. But the action taken for flouting norms was higher, with 190 licences getting cancelled.