

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

Original Application No.1094/2024

News Item titled "All Indian salt Sugar brands contain microplastics reveals study" appearing in the Business Standard dated 13.08.2024

Date of hearing: 23.08.2024

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PRAKASH SHRIVASTAVA, CHAIRPERSON  
HON'BLE DR. A. SENTHIL VEL, EXPERT MEMBER**

Applicant: None appeared

**ORDER**

1. This original application is registered *suo motu* on the basis of the news item titled "All Indian salt Sugar brands contain microplastics reveals study" appearing in the Business Standard dated 13.08.2024.

2. The news item relates to a study titled "Microplastics in Salt and Sugar" that revealed the presence of microplastics in all Indian salt and sugar brands, in various forms, including fiber, pellets, films and fragments. As per the article, the study tested 10 types of salt, including table salt, rock salt, sea salt and local raw salt and five types of sugar purchased from both online and local markets.

3. The news item highlights that the size of these microplastics ranged from 0.1 mm to 5 mm. The highest levels of microplastics were found in iodised salt, in the form of multi-coloured thin fibre and films. The concentration of microplastics in the salt samples ranged from 6.71 to 89.15 pieces per kilogramme of dry weight. Iodised salt had the highest concentration of microplastics (89.15 pieces per kilogramme) while organic rock salt had the lowest (6.70 pieces per kilogramme). In sugar samples, the concentration of microplastics ranged from 11.85 to 68.25

pieces per kilogramme, with the highest concentration found in non-organic sugar.

4. The news item also highlights that the presence of microplastics can have adverse and long-term health impacts on human health. Microplastic can harm both health and the environment. These tiny plastic particles can enter the human body through food, water and air. Recent research has found microplastics in human organs such as the lungs, heart, and even in breast milk and unborn babies. The article asserts that the average Indian consumes 10.98 grams of salt and around 10 spoons of sugar every day, much higher than the World Health Organization's recommended limits.

5. The news item raises substantial issue relating to compliance of the environmental norms.

6. Power of the Tribunal to take up the matter *suo-motu* has been recognized by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of "*Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai vs. Ankita Sinha & Ors.*" reported in 2021 *SCC Online SC 897*.

7. Hence, we implead the following as respondents in the matter:

- (1). Central Pollution Control Board, through its Member Secretary, Parivesh Bhawan, East Arjun Nagar, Delhi-110032
- (2). Indian Institute of Toxicology Research, through its Secretary, Vishvigyan Bhawan, 31, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Lucknow-226001
- (3). Indian Council of Medical Research, through its Secretary, V ramalingaswami Bhawan, PO Box No. 4911, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi-110029, India

(4). Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, through its  
CEO, 03rd & 04th Floor, FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, Near Bal  
Bhawan New Delhi - 110002 India.

8. Issue notice to the above respondents for filing their response/reply  
by way of affidavit before the Tribunal at least one week before the next  
date of hearing. If any of the respondents directly files the reply without  
routing it through his advocate then the said respondent will remain  
virtually present to assist the Tribunal.

9. List on 03.12.2024.

Prakash Shrivastava, CP

Dr. A. Senthil Vel, EM

August 23, 2024  
Original Application No.1094/2024  
SN