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Eating Lots Of 'Sugar & Salt'? You Are Eating Lots of 'Plastics' Too

- **In a first in India, Toxics Link Study found Microplastics In All Salt & Sugar Samples (Branded & Unbranded)**
- **Iodised Packaged Salt had Highest concentration of Microplastics, Organic Rock Salt Lowest**
- **Among 5 Sugar Samples, Organic Sugar had Lowest concentration of Microplastics**

New Delhi: In a first in India**,** Toxics Link conducted a study to test the presence of "microplastics" in "salt and sugar" and found that all Indian salt and sugar brands, small and big, packaged and unpackaged, sold both online and in local markets, contain microplastics. What was even more alarming was that a higher concentration of microplastics was found in "iodised salt" in the form of multicoloured thin fibres and films.

Ten varieties of commonly used salts including table salt, rock salt, sea salt and local raw salt and 5 sugar samples were purchased online and from local markets for the lab test. Except for two salt samples and one sugar sample, all others were branded. Of the 10 salt samples tested, three were packaged iodised salt, three rock salt samples including two organic brands, two sea salt samples and two were local brands.

Key Findings of Toxics Link study titled "MICROPLASTICS IN SALT AND SUGAR"

- The quantity and size of microplastics varied in different salt samples ranging from 6.71 to 89.15 pieces per kg of dry weight and 0.1 mm to 5 mm respectively. They were found in the form of fibres, pellets, films and fragments.
- The highest (89.15 pieces per kg of dry weight) concentration of microplastics was found in one packaged iodised salt sample. The lowest (6.70 pieces per kg of dry weight) was found in an organic rock salt sample.
- The microplastics found in the sugar and salt samples were of eight different colours: transparent, white, blue, red, black, violet, green and yellow.
- The size of the microplastics found in different sugar samples varied from 0.1 mm to 5 mm and were mostly in form of fibres, followed by films and pellets.
- Among the five sugar samples tested, the lowest number of microplastic pieces was found in an organic sugar sample (11.85 pieces per kg) and the highest concentration was 68.25 pieces per kg in a non-organic sugar sample.

Mr Ravi Agarwal, Founder Director, Toxics Link said, ***"The objective of our study was to add to the existing scientific database on microplastics so that the global plastic treaty addresses this issue in a concrete and focused manner. The aim is also to trigger policy action and attract the attention of researchers for possible technological interventions to reduce the exposure risks to microplastics."***

Exposure to microplastics or nanoplastics is emerging as a major global concern as it adversely impacts health and environment. Studies have found microplastics release harmful chemicals causing various health problems including reproductive disorders, developmental delays and cancer in humans.

Tiny plastic particles enter the human body through food, water and air, and have in recent times been found in human internal organs including lungs, heart, breast milk and also in bloodstream and fetal placental tissues. Studies have already found that exposure to microplastics increase the risk of inflammation and cancer of lungs, heart attack, endocrine disruption, weight gain, insulin resistance and infertility.

Earlier studies have found that an Indian on average consumes 10.98 grams of salt and approximately 10 spoons of sugar every day, much higher than World Health Organization's recommended limit. To study the presence of microplastics ingested through food, Toxics Link thus chose Salt and Sugar, given their very high everyday intake among Indians.

Mr Satish Sinha, Associate Director, Toxics Link said, ***"Our study finding of substantial amount of microplastics in all salt and sugar samples is concerning and calls for urgent comprehensive research into the long-term health impacts of microplastics on human health."***

About Toxics Link

Toxics Link is an Indian environmental research and advocacy organisation set up in 1996, engaged in disseminating information to help strengthen the campaign against toxics pollution, provide cleaner alternatives, and bring together groups and people affected by this problem.

Toxics Link's Mission Statement - "Working together for environmental justice and freedom from toxins."

More At: www.toxicslink.org

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