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## Bengaluru: Canned water can give you cancer!

DECCAN CHRONICLE. | AKSHEEV THAKUR (/byline/aksheev-thakur)

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**Bengaluru:** If you believe packaged water in 20-litre cans and sachets is safe to drink, think again. An IISc study warns that most of the samples of canned water tested in the city do not have necessary minerals and are, in fact, dangerous to one's health and in some cases, carcinogenic.

There are over 500 illegal water packaging units operating in the city, and they do not treat water as per norms and sell it with fake ISI logos.

Unfortunately, there is no agency to check the quality of water and ensure that the people get safe drinking water.

Across the city, grocery stores are stocked with 20-litre cans and one is not sure whether they have the Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) certification, which is mandatory. The experts point out that water with less than 100 ppm TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) dissolves some amounts of plastic, causing cancer. Also, the reverse osmosis process, which most of these water units employ, robs water of almost all the essential minerals.

### **DC Expos:**

Mr Srinivas, a senior official at Classic Choice packaged mineral water unit, told Deccan Chronicle that over 1,500 packaged water units have been issued licences in the city, but another 500 units operate illegally.

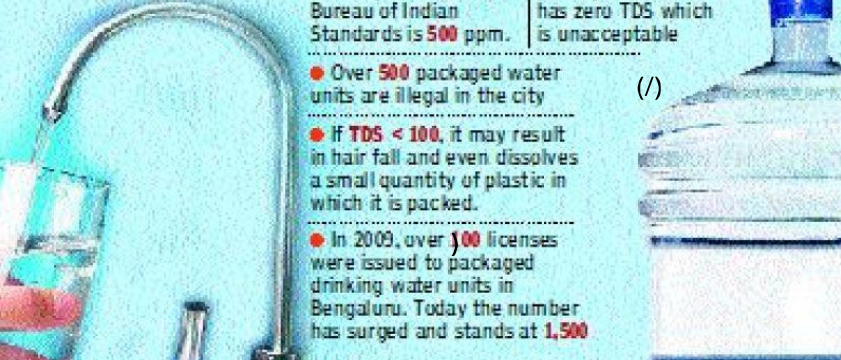
A majority of these units thrive with the help of politicians. "The raids conducted by various government departments are just for show. Licensed units, however, submit monthly reports. Still, there should be a mechanism to keep a check on illegal water units," he said.

During a visit to grocery stores at Kumarswamy Layout, DC found that a lot of them sell 20-litre cans without BIS mark. The largest consumers of canned water here are students from a nearby college.


TDS in ppm	Palatability of water
300-500	good
900-1,200	poor
Above 1,200	unacceptable

Unpalatable facts

- According to IISC, Malleswaram has clean ground water compared to areas near Bellandur and Varthur where presence of heavy metals including arsenic
- The TDS level in drinking water set by Bureau of Indian Standards is 500 ppm.
- Over 500 packaged water units are illegal in the city
- If TDS < 100, it may result in hair fall and even dissolves a small quantity of plastic in which it is packed.
- In 2009, over 100 licenses were issued to packaged drinking water units in Bengaluru. Today the number has surged and stands at 1,500
- Most of the packaged water has zero TDS which is unacceptable




FAKE



BIS MARK

FAKE & GENUINE  
BIS MARK for  
packaged water

GENUINE



BIS MARK  
CALL-011-1405

In Yelahanka and other rural parts of the state, “mineral water” is sold in polythene sachets. An expert warned that the poor quality of plastic used in sachets turns water carcinogenic as it contains a chemical, Bisphenol, which can also lead to neurological disorders.

Mr Siddaiah, a former BBMP commissioner, had banned the use of packaged water at all BBMP offices. Water expert Kshitij Urs too wants the government to issue a blanket ban on packaged water as added minerals are not healthy.

Recently, the Maharashtra government banned the sale of packaged water at all government offices as the quality was a major concern.

### Grandmother knows best

“Follow your grandmother's advice and boil water before drinking,” suggested lead scientist at IISC,

Mr T.V. Ramachandra. The study conducted by him in the lab revealed that most packaged water samples not only lacked essential minerals, but in places like Jigani near Anekal taluk, they also contained dangerous heavy metals. "These water units just can the raw water and do not carry out mandatory processes. In reverse osmosis, all the minerals are lost. If calcium, magnesium and potassium are absent in water, people are bound to suffer from arthritis. The water supplied by the BWSSB is better than the packaged water," he said. He stressed that for the people who receive Cauvery water, just boiling would remove all the contaminants. But with packaged water, the people are under the illusion that they are getting healthy water, which is not the case.

### **Alarming numbers**

According to IISc study, Malleswaram has clean groundwater, compared to areas near Bellandur and Varthur, where the presence of heavy metals, including arsenic, is found

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Over 500 packaged water units in the city are illegal

The TDS level in drinking water set by Bureau of Indian Standards is 500 ppm. Most of the

packaged water brands have zero TDS, which can lead to health complications.

Over 500 packaged water units in the city are illegal

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If TDS is less than 100, it may result in hair fall and even dissolves a small quantity of plastic in which it is packed.