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## FOOD POISONS AND DISEASE

The following article from by T.H.Shikha from The Financial Express explains the dangers we are exposed to by the satanic food devil-industry.

### Assessing the safety of food and drinks we take

By T.H.Shikha

The widespread use of formalin, a colourless strong-smelling chemical, in preservation of fish, fruit and other food items is posing a threat to public health. The chemical used as a solution in water keeps fish fresh and makes fruits like mangoes attractive. This chemical, usually used to stop dead bodies from rotting, is now being used to preserve edible items. Not long ago Bangladesh used to import Rui fish from India and the Indian businessmen used to use formalin.

A recent survey by Consumer Association of Bangladesh (CAB) has found that a section of dishonest traders are using formalin widely in preservation of food items, including fish, fruits and vegetable. On the other hand, they use a kind of hormone such as ethereal and calcium carbide to hasten the ripening of fruits like mangos and bananas, watermelons and vegetables such as tomatoes.

"The excessive intake of formalin destroys immune system in human bodies," says Dr. Parimol Bhattacharjee, a doctor of medicine and child diseases. "The chemical also can damages kidney and liver and regular use of formalin-tainted food may cause cancer."

Take the case of Amjad Hossain, a 55-year-old businessman from Sherpur. He found the taste unusual while drinking apple juice he bought from a big shop in Dhaka city. He then checked the bottle and to his surprise

he found that the juice had long expired its safe use date. "This is what we are forced to eat or drink," complained Amjad." No food seems to be safe if you are buying it from a market."

The incidents of finding insects or weeds in airtight bottles of cold drinks have been quite common in Bangladesh. Distraught consumers have taken those complaints to newspapers for publication. The complaints have made front-page news. There are complaints about the ingredients used to make cold drinks.

Warns Prof. ABM Faroque, a teacher at Dhaka University's Pharmaceutical Technology: "Drinking too much of cold drinks can harm human brain, lungs and kidneys. It can cause permanent disability. Also there are risks of contracting brain tumor by post-50 human beings." He said cold drinks contain caffeine, a substance found in tea and coffee plants, which stimulates the central nervous system. "A normal bottle of cold drinks contain caffeine that can be found in 5 to 20 cups of tea or coffee," he said adding "This substance may easily cause addiction among children."

Adulteration is also found in many food items in Bangladesh. A recent study by the Institute of Public Health has found that 96 per cent of sweetmeats sold in capital Dhaka are not pure and clean. In the case of biscuits, the adulteration is 24 per cent, in bread 59 per cent. Even sulphuric acid, a strong corrosive acid, is said to be used in making curds, according to the study. Warm curds are often placed in filthy water for cooling while it was found that powder milk that had expired its safe use date was being used.

It is a common knowledge that there is adulteration in many bakery products. No one can guarantee that the condensed milk produced sold in the country is safe for public health. The issue has even gone to the court.

Said Quazi Faruque, an assistant secretary at CAB, "The production licenses of four brands of condensed milk were cancelled by the industries Ministry after it was found following investigation that wrong things were used in those products. However, those brands are still selling in the country."

The United Nations has recognised eight basic rights for the consumers, including one to get products not harmful to health. The others deal with rights to know all about a product and the provision of compensation to be paid to an affected consumer. However, it is rather an exception than a rule to find a product that gives full information about how it is made and how long it is safe for consumption. Even many consumers are not aware about their rights.