

Supreme Court notice on Honey Adulteration

April 21, 2021

In News: The Supreme Court on April 19, 2021 issued a notice to the Centre and 34 state and Union Territories on a petition seeking directions to check the authenticity of honey being sold in India.

Honey Adulteration

- Honey marketed by several major brands in India has been found to be adulterated with sugar syrup, according to an investigation conducted by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).
- CSE is a non-profit organisation dedicated to public interest research and advocacy.

Key Findings

- The Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) test failed to pass 10 of the 13 brands that were tested.
- Dabur, Patanjali, Baidyanath, Zandu, Hitkari, and Apis Himalaya honey samples all failed the globally recognised NMR exam.
- Honey-producing companies in India are importing synthetic sugar syrups from China to adulterate with honey.
- CSE tracked down Chinese trade portals that were selling fructose syrup that could pass adulteration checks.
- Even if 50-80% of the honey is adulterated with syrup, Chinese companies told CSE that it will pass all of the necessary tests under Indian standards.
- According to Indian rules, tests are used to determine if the honey has been tainted with C4 sugar (cane sugar) or C3 sugar (rice sugar).
- Adulteration also harmed beekeepers, who considered it

unprofitable to make pure honey because sugar-syrup honey was often available at half the price.

NMR (Nuclear Magnetic Resonance) Test

- It's a test that determines a product's molecular composition.
- It's an analytical chemistry technique for determining the content and purity of a sample, as well as its molecular structure, that's used in quality control and analysis.
- Indian law does not require the NMR test for honey that is sold locally, but it is necessary for export.
- Although recent NMR tests were effective in detecting additives, they failed to detect the quantity of adulteration.