

Mr Cola Bottlewallah.
I run a soft drink factory to provide India with 6.5 billion soft drink bottles annually. We work very hard to give every Dilliwalah 50 soft drink bottles every year! The best thing for us here is that water, our main raw material, is so easily available. All we have to do is buy land and the groundwater comes with it free. I have heard that Kerala's Palakkad district plant located in a village manufactures about 85 lorry loads of Coca Cola, Mirinda, Thums Up and Kinley bottled water every day by drawing 1.5 million liters of groundwater per day, almost free!



The Real thing.
Palakkad district facts

- Water mining has parched the village land for more than 2000 people living in a 2-km radius of the Palakkad factory.
- Scientific analysis of the water shows that the village water contains very high levels of hardness and salinity that render the water unfit for human consumption, domestic use (bathing and washing) and for irrigation.
- Cultivation in over 600 acres of land has been abandoned, severely affecting employment opportunities.
- Village women walk nearly 5 kilometers up and down every morning and evening to fetch water as nearby wells have dried up.
- For every bottle of soft drink produced by the plant, three bottles of water are lost to the production process.



Pay for Your Water, Please!
The soft drink industry enjoys unregulated and free extraction of groundwater. They can privatise entire aquifers by virtue of owning a small piece of land.

Cleaning up!
Many people justify the whole issue by saying that soft drinks use water that has pesticide in the first place, so it's not their fault. But then, the glass of water that you get from your tap is virtually free and you pay up to ten rupees for your soft drink. So shouldn't that cover the purification process too? Reputed mineral water brands all over the world have brought down their pesticide content to zero. There's no reason why we can't expect mineral water standards for soft drinks.





Mr Waterless Sugarcanewallah.
I have 60 acres of land and have spent Rs 20,000 for sugarcane cultivation. I used to pump water for 18-20 hours but now the water stops after four hours of pumping. Our wells are also going dry. Many villagers are falling sick after drinking the well water. All the problems have started after the soft drink factory has come up.


On your mark!
In the 1960s, farmers embraced the green revolution. High yielding crops were introduced into India and fields were given daily doses of pesticides.

Get Set! Government provided easy availability of pesticides to the farmers at subsidised rates. This resulted in a high demand of pesticides.


Go...
...to toxic dumping. After the West cracked down on pesticides stuck with an excess of pesticides, manufacturers decided to dump them in Third World countries like India, where the demand had already been created.

I'm Still Not worried...
Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Act in India takes care of the pesticide residues in food products. With new food products pouring in markets everyday the PFA Act should be further strenghtened. The Codex Alimentarius Commission was created in 1963 by the Food And Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO), which set international food standards. Indian industry is harmonising its pesticide limits to the Codex guidelines.



There's more info at:
www.polarisinstitute.org
www.cokewatch.org
www.socialist-alliance.org/killer_coke
www.softdrink.org.au
www.corporatecampaign.org/killerck.htm
www.grn.org/coke/coca-cola.html
www.cokespotlight.org
www.cspinet.org/sodapop



Red Alert!
Nutrition = 0
Calories overdose

Carbonated drinks are the single biggest source of refined sugars in American diet. In the past 10 years, soft drink consumption among children has almost doubled in the United States. Are we going the American way?

WHAT'S IN MY SOFT DRINK?

Phosphoric Acid: Added to give the tangy taste of cola drinks. Causes softening of the teeth and bones.

Sugar: Soft drink manufacturers are the largest single user of refined sugar in the United States. One bottle of soda drink has 6 spoons of sugar in it! Would you ever eat 6 teaspoons of sugar at once? Such high doses of sugar increase obesity by 60% also promote tooth decay.

Aspartame: This chemical is used as a sugar substitute in diet soda. There are over 92 different health side effects associated with aspartame consumption including brain tumors.

Caffeine: Popular soft drinks contain caffeine. Caffeine is a mildly addictive stimulant drug. Although it occurs naturally in kola nuts, the soft drink makers say they add it for taste. But we all know it is added to keep consumers coming back for more.

Raw water: There is no mandatory law that says the raw used for making soft drinks should be the same standard as the bottled water. So you can trust your bottled water but not the water of your soft drink.

Take Action!

California has banned the sale of soda and junk food in elementary schools. In Tennessee and Wisconsin, it was the parents' protests that made school districts refuse to sign contracts with soft-drink vendors. Schools in India should help parents promote good nutrition, rather than support junk food that are high in added sugar and fat.