



Thursday, April 3, 2003, Chandigarh, India

## Palak Metal Paneer

The level of contaminants in food in India is seldom below the prescribed limit.

The grow-quick varieties of vegetables, grains and meat products have added a new dimension to the problem.

Life-threatening chemicals are used to make grains grow faster and in abundance.

The over-sized brinjals, apples and broilers too are the result of excessive use of chemicals. Not even the extreme provision of life imprisonment for producing and marketing food items dangerous to human health is likely to make much difference.

India is a land where most people learn to live dangerously because to a majority of the population safe and healthy options have never been made available.

About a month ago the level of contaminants in bottled water of even leading brands had caused a minor stir in Delhi. There was a bit of official he-haw and that was the end of the controversy. A random check of any brand of bottled water today would show the same level of toxins that had sent alarm bells ringing when the news was first broken. The same is true of the poisoned vegetables and fruits that flood the markets across the country.

The growers do not get punished. The sellers are not penalised. And few consumers ever establish a link between their fast deteriorating health and the quality of food they consume. The bulk of the population in Delhi may not even be aware of the alarming report that what is being sold in most places is not Popeye's palak that makes the pipe-smoking sailor challenge even Rambo.

Yes, a detailed research, funded by the UK Department of International Development and conducted in Delhi by Shrishti, an NGO, reveals that the ubiquitous palak and bhindi, that are part of most Indian meals, are highly contaminated.

The credibility of the report should not be questioned because of the number of agencies that collaborated in the project.

Shrishti involved the Imperial College of London, Banaras Hindu University, Delhi University, the Indian Agricultural Research Institute and Development Tracks for studying the quality of vegetables grown in and around Delhi.

And what did the study reveal? That 72 per cent of the samples of palak contained lead concentration exceeding the limit mentioned in the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act. Nearly 25 per cent of the samples had more than double the dangerous limit. The samples also had a high concentration of zinc.

**The study was not a rush-job. The team took three years collecting samples from diverse sources and putting them under the microscope.** Until the general level of resistance reaches the scale where responsible civic authorities create effective mechanisms for preventing unwholesome foodstuff from reaching the markets all that the consumer can do is wash the fruits and vegetables at least three times to make them "half-safe" for human consumption. Which water should they use?

The contaminated bottled water or the droplets that pop out once in a while from the usually dry taps in Delhi?

## Pesticides in Carbonated Drinks in India

Ref:- Global CEO • October 2003 ( pdf e- book Read one for free ) Pages 47 to 56

On August 05, 2003 a **report** published by India's **Center for Science and Environment [CSE]** a Non Government Organization [NGO] made newspaper headlines across the Country.

The CSE Report :- Main Features

- Tested 03 bottles each of 12 different brands of soft drinks for the 32 different pesticides used in India.
- Used the Gas Chromatography and Mass Spectrometry which established the identity of a chemical beyond doubt.
- The report indicated that 12 major brands of soft drinks sold in the country's

Capital New Delhi contained high levels of four pesticides which were well known to cause illnesses ranging from **cancer to brain damage**.

### CSC Report

#### Level of Pesticides above EU norms

<b>Mirinda Lemon</b>	<b>70 times</b>	<b>Limca</b>	<b>30 times</b>
<b>Coca -Cola</b>	<b>45 times</b>	<b>Blue Pepsi</b>	<b>29 times</b>
<b>Fanta</b>	<b>43 times</b>	<b>Mountain Dew</b>	<b>28 times</b>
<b>Mirinda Orange</b>	<b>39 times</b>	<b>Thump Up</b>	<b>22 times</b>
<b>Pepsi</b>	<b>37 times</b>	<b>Diet Pepsi</b>	<b>14 times</b>
<b>7 Up</b>	<b>33 times</b>	<b>Sprit</b>	<b>11 times</b>

Source :- [www.myenjoyzone.com](http://www.myenjoyzone.com)

• **A common man may consider that some big companies are adding pesticides to their soft drinks or are adulterating it in some other way to further their interests.**

#### After the Report

- The Indian Parliament immediately announced a ban on soft drinks on its premises.
- Various State Governments decided to send samples of the soft drinks to laboratories for testing.
- Active groups began staging protest.
- Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola were two worried companies as they had much at stake, in the Indian market which was valued at Rs. 7000 cr.



## **Health ministry: what is cooking?**

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- February 2004: Central Committee on Food Standards (CCFS) meets. Endorses JPC report. Says it will set final standards.
- June 2004: Pesticide Residue Sub-Committee of CCFS meets. Decides to do year-long monitoring.
- November 2004: CCFS meets. Decides to set up National Expert Committee to study matter.
- 2005: National Expert Committee meets. Decides to test samples of sugar. This will be pilot study.
- 2006: Still testing. Officials say that as this is pilot study, no timeframe on when final standards will be set. But why test raw sugar, when companies use refined sugar? No answer.

## **Bottom-line: 2006 no standard**

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- Department of Consumer Affairs tells BIS not to “rush”. Says health ministry not on board. Companies are objecting.
- Ministry of Health says more research is needed. Says pilot study will be completed soon.

**“Good science” is the convenient tool to obstruct action.**

**Companies win. We lose. Acceptable?**

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## **Why should we care?**

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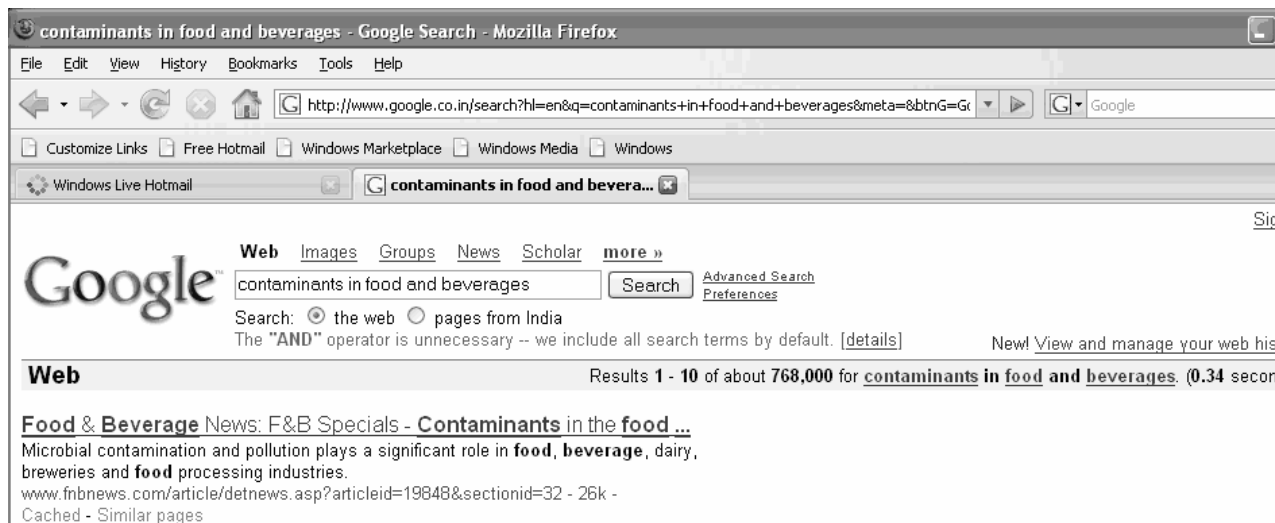
- Pesticides are toxic. In all drinks we have found levels above the finalised but not notified standard. They are **“unsafe”**.
- Cannot be acceptable. Soft drinks are “choice” of millions. Particularly children. Cannot say that this is ok. Will be fixed later. Will set up committee. **Cannot play with our health.**

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# Web Information on Contaminants in Food and Beverages

Date : 24 September 2007

I ] Web Pages : 768000



II ] Pages from India : Only 449



This suggests the need to create awareness in this subject