

# COKE - PEPSI QUIT INDIA !

**Coke-Pepsi are destroying our health, environment, and people's livelihoods.  
Join the countrywide movement against these giant multinational corporations !!**

Thanda matlab Coca Cola... Oye bubbly... Yeh pyaas hai badi... Shahrukh Khan says these words, and a bottle of Coke-Pepsi involuntarily pops up in our hands. And it keeps popping up. Why do we drink Coke-Pepsi-Mirinda-Sprite? To quench our thirst? Or as *timepass* with our friends? Or because it has become a fashion? However much we question ourselves, it will be difficult to find the real answer. What do these cold drinks contain that makes us want to drink them again and again?

## **Carbonated old drinks – a toxic brew**

One reason why we drink Coke-Mirinda is to refresh ourselves, especially after becoming exhausted. What do these cold drinks contain that refreshes us? The shocking answer: **caffeine**. An artificial stimulant. But also an addictive. And so we get hooked to drinking cold drinks. Another important constituent is **acids**. Especially phosphoric acid. Acids are added to give bite. In such strength that cold drinks can be used to open clogged drains. Or make toilets sparkling clean. Cold drinks therefore damage the stomach. They also dissolve the calcium in the bones, making them fragile. Yet another chemical added to cold drinks is **ethylene glycol**. An anti-freeze compound. So that soft drinks can be consumed really chilled. But it is known to cause cancer.

To counter the bitter taste of all the above additives, cold drinks contain an **excessive amount of sugar**. 8-9 teaspoonfuls per 300 ml bottle. Therefore regular consumption of cold drinks means inviting obesity. Along with it come, diabetes and heart problems. And of course, acids and sugar also promote tooth decay.

Another reason why we often drink cold drinks is because we think they are 'safe', 'purified'. But the 12 leading drinks made by Coca Cola and Pepsi companies in India have been found to contain very high levels of **pesticides!** Including DDT and Lindane. After this was proven, the Indian parliament banned the sale of Coke-Pepsi products in its cafeteria. But not in the country! Indians consumed over Rs. 7000 crores worth of this toxic brew last year!

## **Alternate nutritious Indian drinks**

Kokam sherbet, mango panha, lime juice, tender coconut, sugarcane juice, neera, lassi, innumerable fruit juices – there are so many traditional drinks available in the country. Which are not just fresh and tasty, but nutritious too. And cheap and easily available. Yet we drink the toxic coloured water made by Coke and Pepsi! The reason: we are actually seduced into doing so by the over 20,000 crore rupees spent by Coke and Pepsi every year on advertising the world over. The greatest impact of their ads is on children. Children are also the worst sufferers of the harmful effects of cold drinks.

## **Impact on environment and people's livelihoods**

Coca Cola and Pepsi companies have set up 90 bottling plants in India. It takes 9 liters of water to make 1 liter of Coke/Pepsi. Each plant draws on the average 10-lakh liters of groundwater a day. So groundwater levels are falling, creating water shortages for people living in the nearby regions. Wells are going dry. Agriculture is getting affected. On top of it, these giant corporations have been discharging their toxic wastewater into nearby fields and rivers, polluting the ground water and the soil. With devastating long term consequences for the health of the people living in the region.

Faced with destruction of their livelihoods, people living around the bottling plants are fighting back. Kala Dera in Rajasthan, Mehdiganj, Ballia and Jaunpur in Uttar Pradesh, Sivagangai in Tamil Nadu, Kudus in Maharashtra, everywhere people are waging militant struggles, demanding closure of the bottling plants. And they have won

significant victories too: in Plachimada, where people have been on a continuous dharna since April 2002, **Coke's bottling plant has been shut down since March 2004!** Elsewhere, people have begun imposing a ban on Coke-Pepsi in their offices and canteens. In north India, over 10 lakh students and villagers participated in forming an unbelievable 1200-km long human chain surrounding Delhi. Students and teachers have come together in universities like the famous Anna University in Chennai and dozens of colleges all over the country to declare their campuses as '**COKE-PEPSI FREE ZONE**'s.

A global movement in support of these struggles is also building up. Eleven universities in the US have thrown Coca Cola products off their campus. Many unions across Europe have also banned Coke, in protest against Coke's human-rights violations.

### **Join the campaign to boycott Coke-Pepsi !**

Friends, through their ads, Coke and Pepsi have made us mental slaves. They are destroying our health. They are destroying our country's environment, they are depriving people of drinking water and destroying their livelihoods, they are brazenly breaking the laws of the country. Yet the government is not taking any action against them. It is meekly surrendering before these two giant American multinational corporations.

Therefore, **we must act!** We must join the growing countrywide movement against Coke and Pepsi. We, the students of Abeda Inamdar College, have taken a pledge to boycott the cold drinks made by Coca Cola and Pepsi companies. We took out a rally against Coke-Pepsi on February 16, 2006 and then got our college authorities to declare our college a COKE-PEPSI FREE ZONE. Together with Lokayat, we have decided to take this campaign to other colleges, offices and residential societies of Pune. People of Pune! We call upon you to:

1. Boycott all cold drinks made by Coca Cola and Pepsi companies.
2. Organise and stop the sale of Coke and Pepsi soft drinks in your colleges, offices and canteens.
3. Organise cycle rallies, form human chains, and adopt other such forms to create awareness amongst more people.

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## **Aaghaz – the beginning**

### **Lokayat**

*Social organization of students and teachers  
of Abeda Inamdar College for Girls*

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