

**AACI Update-5
May 2015**

Special

**He who pays the piper
calls the tune**

Blog by Dr. Arun Gupta
Published in Down To Earth,
Science and Environment
Online on 24 Apr, 2015.
Arun Gupta is convener of
Alliance Against Conflict of
Interest
<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/he-who-pays-piper-calls-tune>

**Beneficiaries of
businesses should not be
allowed to become policy
makers**

Blog by Chander Uday
Singh Published in Down To
Earth, Science and
Environment Online on 24
Apr, 2015. Chander Uday
Singh is a senior advocate
at Supreme Court of India
<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/beneficiaries-businesses-should-not-be-allowed-become-policy-makers>

**Roundtable discussion on
“Prevention and
Management of Conflict of
Interest”**

AACI organised a roundtable
discussion on “Prevention
and Management of Conflict
of Interest” in September
2014 at IIC, New Delhi.
Prashant Bhushan and Shanti
Bhushan were among the
participants.
<http://www.aaci-india.org/doc/Report-Prevention-and-Management-of-COI-Bill.pdf>

Protecting people against vested interests in public policy

The purpose of this update is to provide specialised information on the issue of conflict of interest in food, health and nutrition sectors to the concerned people including members of AACI, public interest groups, people fighting corruption, interested policymakers and others.

PM asks MPs to stay out of parliamentary committee in which there is conflict of interest

April 9, 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently directed his MPs to stay out of parliamentary committees dealing with subjects they have vested interest in. This brings ray of hope in times where people are misusing their power to frame vested policy frame works against public interest. In a recent discussion among the committee deliberating on the health risks from tobacco use in India, BJP's MP Shyam Charan Gupta a member of the same panel, claimed that there are no such risks. When contemplated, the reason behind this shocking comment is nothing but his flourishing business of making beedis, indigenous tobacco wrapped in tendu leaves.

He is not the only one involved in the situation of conflict interest. There are several MPs in many political parties having conflict of interest among their personal business and official involvements. Its ironical when they claim that being in the same business makes them an appropriate and insightful member of such panels.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Venkaiah Naidu summoned Allahabad MP Shyam Charan Gupta, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi intervened on the issue of conflict of interest in the Parliamentary panel on increasing pictorial warning on tobacco products.

Gupta has been asked to explain his remark where he said that there is no link between tobacco and cancer. Also he has been asked to explain why he did not put off himself from the committee.

After the PM advised the health ministry to increase the pictorial warnings from the current 40 per cent to 65, the committee met again on 6th April 2015 to discuss the issue and has refrained from issuing any recommendations yet. Surprisingly MP Shyam Charan Gupta did not attend this meeting.

The Supreme Court is set to hear a plea soon, filed by advocate Prashant Bhushan on behalf of the NGO Health for Millions Trust that pray the court to direct the government to increase pictorial warnings on all tobacco products. On 6th April 2015, the court called additional solicitor general Ranjit Kumar to ask health ministry's stand on the issue.

Source: <http://blogs.economictimes.indiatimes.com/et-editorials/conflict-of-interest-on-parliament-panels/>
<http://www.asianage.com/india/members-parliament-should-declare-any-conflict-interest-venkaiah-naidu-953>



GMO evaluation in Argentina affected by conflict of interest

2 March '15, An Argentine journalist Dario Aranda exposed conflict of interest within "Conabia" Argentina's National Agricultural Biotechnology Advisory Committee. He claims that the Argentine GMO regulator Conabia is stacked with people who have conflicts of interest with the GMO industry. People with links to Monsanto, Syngenta and Dow were found evaluating the safety of the GMOs submitted for approval by these exact same companies. Conflicts of interest and complicities are pouring out loud in the approval of GMOs in Argentina.

This GMO company-regulatory nexus has the potential to affect people's health by getting onto their food plates with GM food potentially causing cancer and birth defects related to sprayed Roundup herbicide. The recent World Health Organization (WHO) report on glyphosate, also confirms that world's most used Roundup herbicide by Monsanto causes cancer.

GM Watch and Earth Open Source initially raised these issues with UK and European politicians and retailers back in 2010 with their Roundup and birth defects report. In response the Government said that these were internal issues for the Argentine government and nothing to do with them.

Subsequently, Conabia has been selected as a "reference center" for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to provide technical and scientific advice to regarding the "bio

safety' of GMOs. Now, people linked to the leading GMO developer companies, Monsanto, Syngenta, and Dow, would advice world's major food security organization whether GMOs are safe. This development is alarming and dangerous!

Further, the author has shared examples of the linkages between agribusiness houses, independent scientists and the private sector. Monsanto, Syngenta, Ledesma and Dow, among other corporations, are found on both sides of the table, in conflicts of interest with a complicit state.

Source: <http://upside-down-world.org/main/argentina-archives-32/5227-over-half-the-experts-in-argentine-gmo-regulatory-body-have-conflicts-of-interest-with-industry>



Industry driven researches poses danger for public health, discloses BMJ

In its latest investigation, BMJ's disclosed the association of conflict of interest between the BIG SUGAR industry and Government's crusaders of public health, contemplating science for sale.

The big sugar industry has been found supporting various governments financially showing their pseudo public interest in nutrition science. The euphoric idea of engaging with the private sector for solving the nutrition problem of the world is turning out be the profit making field for big sugar industries.

As an example the BIG SUGAR industry provides consultancies and research support to prominent scientists who also work on nutrition issues for the UK government following the footsteps.

The lack of transparency in the UK government decision on public funding for a new vaccine (Bexsero) for meningococcal disease is one such example examined by the Crowcroft and colleagues.

Allowing the influence of these corporations on scientific researches and public policy can be the biggest mistake a nation would make against public interest. The investigation signified the concern of loosing trust of people in science for solving their public health concerns.

Source: <http://www.bmj.com/content/350/bmj.h795>



"Try this—I just bought a hundred shares."

Corporate backed researches blame the solar energies for climate change, denying man made contribution

Dr. Wei-Hock Soon, Scientist of Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Cambridge is known for his skeptical research correlations between solar output and climate indicators, ignoring the emissions from human behavior, has been alleged of conflict of interest.

The media reports claims that he has received \$1.2 million from fossil fuels interests; at least \$409,000 came from Southern Company, an Atlanta-based electric utility that uses coal to generate power for his research studies.

When asked, Dr. Soon failed to disclose funding from Southern in his published research. The media report has sparked a debate over whether Dr. Soon actually needed to disclose his funding and, more notably, what exactly constitutes a conflict of interest in the field of climate science.

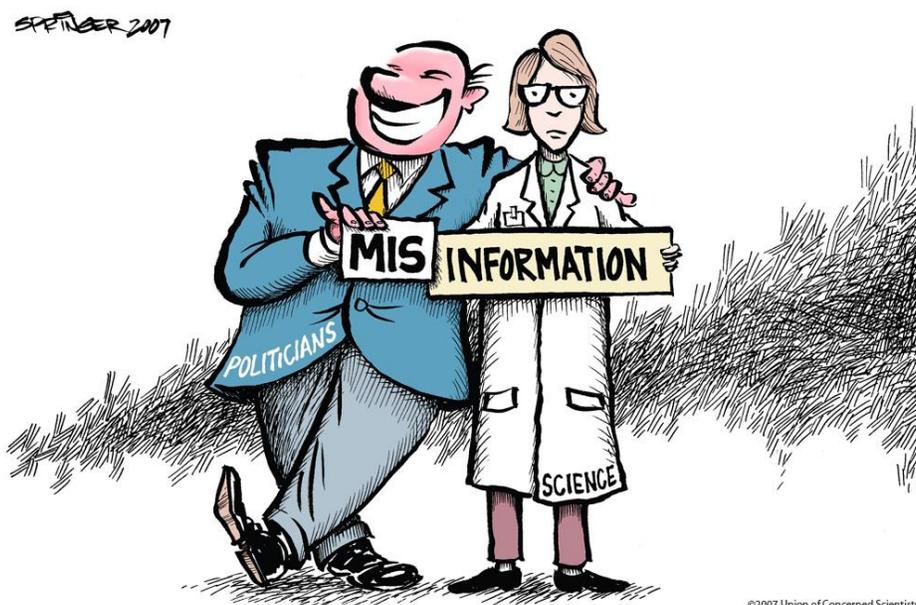
Greenpeace, the environmental group has been questioning Dr. Soon's work from past four years alleging corporate influence in his research findings. As Smithsonian is a government agency, Greenpeace was able to request Dr. Soon's correspondence and grant agreements to be released under the Freedom of Information Act. The newly disclosed documents, plus additional documents compiled by Greenpeace

over the last four years reveals major funders to Dr. Soon's work include Southern Company Services with huge investments in coal-burning power plants, the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation (Mr. Koch's fortune derives partly from oil refining), Exxon Mobil and the American Petroleum Institute. The documents also show that Dr. Soon, in correspondence with his corporate funders, described many of his scientific papers as "deliverables" that he completed in exchange for their money.

What is more shocking is that the Smithsonian Institute and Southern Company Services had signed a non disclosure agreement for grant studies, though Charles Alcock, Director of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics said that the provision in Southern's funding agreement prohibiting disclosure "was a mistake. We will not permit similar wording in future grant agreements". Subsequently, the Smithsonian has also launched an investigation for Dr. Soon and their own ethics & disclosure policies for funded research.

Though Dr. Soon denied any vested influence of the funding sources on his research studies, his controversial work and Smithsonian's ignorance poses speculations whether the research findings are in public interest or corporate interest.

Source: <http://dailycaller.com/2015/02/27/what-does-a-conflict-of-interest-in-climate-science-look-like/>



CONFLICT OF INTEREST: A Case for Legislation

Phone: 011-42683059

Fax: 011-27343606

E-Mail: aaci.india@gmail.com

Address:
SU-74, First Floor,
Pitampura, Delhi-110034.

List of members
on AACI Website

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://www.aaci-india.org>

N Srinivasan under tight scrutiny for conflicting roles in BCCI & IPL franchise

As the Indian Premier League (IPL) controversy unfolded, N Srinivasan has been under tight scrutiny for his conflicting roles. In India the case has gained much lime light because of the glitterati associated with it.

The Supreme Court of India on January 22, 2015 ruled that N Srinivasan cannot continue to hold dual roles - that of a BCCI administrator and a franchise-owner, at the same time. The President-in exile was ordered to choose either his position as the BCCI president or that of the owner of the Chennai Super Kings franchise.

India's highest court of law added that BCCI is given the authority by the Government of India to discharge their public functions. Therefore, they are not merely a private body. BCCI functions are public functions and are amenable to judicial law.

The court ruled that N Srinivasan or any other cricket administrator having commercial interests in cricket cannot contest for BCCI posts till they continue to have those interests.

The court had ordered BCCI to conduct the elections within six weeks from January 22 and requested the three-judge committee to decide in six months the punishment for those put in the dock by Justice Mudgal committee. Now, Srinivasan would not be allowed to contest till his conflict of interest was erased or the committee decided the punishment, whichever was later.

Despite the Hon'ble Supreme Court's order the BCCI nominated N Srinivasan to the post of chairman of ICC since it was the turn of BCCI to have its nominee. On 30th March 2015 Cricket Association of Bihar secretary Aditya Verma shot off a letter to BCCI president Jagmohan Dalmiya and secretary Anurag Thakur, asking the duo to "recall the nomination" of N Srinivasan from the powerful post of ICC chairman.

On 16th April 2015 Aditya Verma wrote a letter urging the International Cricket Council (ICC) to "stop" incumbent chairman N. Srinivasan from holding on to the position till he is being probed by a high level panel constituted by the Supreme Court of India.

Source: <http://www.cricbuzz.com/cricket-news/69501/n-srinivasan-cannot-contest-bcci-elections-supreme-court>



About AACI

The Alliance Against Conflict of Interest (AACI) is an alliance of organisations and individuals working in various sectors – doctors, lawyers, women's and children's health groups, activists and media. AACI works on issues of conflict of interest and brings them to the notice of the parties involved, the government and media. AACI aims at having a legal protection from conflict of interest in all sectors in public policy and institutionalise ethics and transparency.