



Case Study Series 3:

Addressing Citizen's Concerns: Inspiration from Proactive Civil Servants

Case Title:

Personal Initiative to Bring Policy Changes

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The case studies for this series are collected from real-life cases of civil servants working in different South Asian countries. This collection initiative is an attempt to document different proactive approaches taken by civil servants and, in the process, encourage other civil servants to become more proactive in their own workplaces. If you know of other such instances of proactive acts, please email us (parvez.yousuf@northsouth.edu), and we will get back to you to collect more information.

Personal Initiative to Bring Policy Changes

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Presence of Heavy Metallic Substances in Pesticides

These days, pesticides are increasingly used in agricultural production, and we often consume them indirectly due to such use. Some of these pesticides contain heavy metallic substances that can enter our bodies through our food and cause different deadly diseases like cancer and kidney failure.

The best global practice for ensuring food safety is that pesticides must be free from heavy metallic substances. However, almost all types of chemical pesticides in Bangladesh were found to contain harmful heavy metallic elements. Traces of heavy metallic elements were also found in our puffed rice and the aromatic *Chinigura* rice. As a result, in 2022, due to the presence of two heavy metallic chemicals such as

carbendazim and tricyclazole, two components found in pesticides above the permitted levels, one of the European countries banned puffed rice and the aromatic *Chinigura* rice supplied by several reputable enterprises in Bangladesh. Exporters worry that if dangerous compounds are found like this in our products, the European Union (EU) may completely ban all food and agricultural products from Bangladesh.

Problem

For years, heavy metallic substances in pesticides are causing serious public health problems.

Solution

The civil servant personally advocated and contacted the Food Safety Authority.

Outcome

The Ministry of Agriculture took initiatives to make a separate policy regarding testing heavy metallic substances in pesticides.

Personal Initiative to Address the Issue

Mr. X is a civil servant. He became concerned about addressing this problem of heavy metallic chemicals in pesticides. He personally contacted the higher-level officials of the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority to address this matter. After the announcement of the ban on rice products, Mr. X wrote to the Bangladesh Food Safety Authority to test pesticide residue and heavy metallic substances in all types of rice in our country. He stated that pesticide residues must be tested to detect the presence of deadly heavy metallic elements like lead, cadmium, and chromium. After a long delay, in 2022, the Ministry of Agriculture directed the Agricultural Research Council and the Directorate of Agricultural Extension to make a separate policy regarding testing heavy metallic substances in pesticides.

Declarations

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Baniamin, H. M., & Jamil, I. (2021). Effects of representative bureaucracy on perceived performance and fairness: Experimental evidence from South Asia. *Public Administration*.

Baniamin, H. M., Jamil, I., & Askvik, S. (2020). Mismatch between lower performance and higher trust in the civil service: Can culture provide an explanation? *International Political Science Review*, 41(2), 192-206.

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