



Sale of Loose Cigarettes and Beedis

Why in News

The **Maharashtra government** has **banned** the **sale of loose [cigarettes](#) and beedis**, to reduce the consumption of tobacco and to comply with the **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) 2003**.

Key Points

- **Other States: Chhattisgarh** had banned the sale of loose cigarettes in 2020.
 - **Karnataka** banned the sale of loose cigarettes, beedis and chewing tobacco **in 2017**.
- **Reasons for Ban:**
 - The government's aim is to make sure that users are **able to see the mandated warnings on cigarette packaging**.
 - Under **COTPA**, tobacco products **need to be sold with graphic health warnings** on their packaging and loose cigarettes do not comply with this rule.
 - **Section 7** of the Act mentions, no person shall, directly or indirectly, produce, supply or distribute 6 cigarettes or any other tobacco products unless every package of cigarettes or any other tobacco products produced, supplied or distributed by him bears thereon, or on its label.
 - The Act also mentions that the warning should be **specified on not less than one of the largest panels of the packet** in which the cigarettes or any other tobacco products have been packed for distribution, sale and supply.
- **Pattern of Tobacco Use in India**
 - According to the **Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2016-2017**, which was a household survey conducted on over 74,000 people aged 15 years or more.
 - **Maharashtra has the lowest prevalence of tobacco smoking** in the country.
 - Over 91% of current smokers in the country believe that smoking **causes serious illness**.
 - **Smoke Tobacco- 10.7%** of all adults (99.5 million) in India **smoke tobacco**.
 - **In either Form- 28.6%** of all adults use tobacco either in smoke or smokeless form.
 - **Average Monthly Expenditure:** In India, for a daily cigarette smoker around **Rs 1,100** and that for a daily beedi smoker is estimated to be around **Rs 284**.
 - **Loose Tobacco Buyers:** The survey also showed that **68%** of smokers, **17%** bidi smokers, and **50%** of smokeless tobacco users in India purchase.
 - As per the **Tobacco Free Union, over 1 million people die** from tobacco-related diseases in India every year.
- **Effectiveness of Bans:**
 - The effectiveness of bans is not well known and depends on **how widespread and stringent the implementation is**.

- According to a **2017** study published in the **Journal of the Scientific Society**, **raising tax on tobacco products** is one of the key ways of controlling tobacco consumption.
- **Caveat:** While on one hand making tobacco products dearer may lead to an **overall decrease in consumption** of tobacco globally, on the other hand, it can lead to an **increase in the sale of loose cigarettes**.

▪ Tobacco Control in India

◦ International Convention:

- Governments adopt and implement the tobacco control provisions of the **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)**.
- It is the **first international treaty** negotiated under the auspices of the WHO.
- It was adopted by the World Health Assembly on 21 May 2003 and entered into force on 27 February 2005.
- India **ratified** the WHO FCTC in **2004**.
- It was developed in response to the **globalization of the tobacco epidemic** and is an **evidence-based treaty** that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health. The FCTC's measures to combat tobacco use include:
 - Price and tax measures.
 - Large, graphic warnings on tobacco packages.
 - Keeping plain packaging to minimise the promotion of the products.
 - 100% smoke-free public spaces.
 - A ban on tobacco marketing.
 - Support for smokers who want to quit.
 - Prevention of tobacco industry interference.
- **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003:** Replaced the Cigarettes Act of 1975 (largely limited to statutory warnings- 'Cigarette Smoking is Injurious to Health' to be displayed on cigarette packs and advertisements. It did not include non-cigarettes). The 2003 Act also included cigars, bidis, cheroots, pipe tobacco, hookah, chewing tobacco, pan masala, and gutka.
- **National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), 2008:**
 - **Objective:** To control tobacco consumption and minimize tobacco consumption related deaths
 - **Activities:** Training and capacity building; information, education, and communication (IEC) activities; tobacco control laws; reporting survey and surveillance and tobacco cessation
- **Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Amendment Rules, 2020:**
 - It was mandated that the specified health warning shall cover at least 85% of the principal display area of the package.
 - Of this, 60% shall cover pictorial health warning and 25% shall cover textual health warning.
 - This shall be positioned on the top edge of the package and in the same direction as the information on the principal display area.
- **mCessation Programme:**
 - It is an initiative **using mobile technology** for tobacco cessation.
 - India launched mCessation using text messages in 2016 as part of the government's **Digital India initiative**.
 - It uses two-way messaging between the individual seeking to quit tobacco use and programme specialists providing them dynamic support.
- **Prevention and Control of Pollution Act of 1981-** Recognized smoking as an air pollutant.
- **Cable Television Networks Amendment Act of 2000-** Prohibited the transmission of advertisements on tobacco and liquor in India.

- The Government of India has issued regulations under the **Food Safety and Standards Act 2006** which lay down that tobacco or nicotine cannot be used as ingredients in food products.

Way Forward

- There is a need for **comprehensive tobacco control policy**, accessible and affordable cessation services strengthening the implementation of COTPA, alternative opportunities for people engaged in tobacco cultivator, processing and manufacturing.
- The proportion of **buying loose cigarettes decreased** with **increased levels of education and awareness**. Enhancing public awareness through campaigns, educational programs in schools, strong and prominent graphic health warnings.

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