

# Tobacco: A threat to development

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## ABSTRACT

Tobacco consumption is one of the biggest threat to human race at the current time . With the increased modernization, the prevalence of tobacco consumption has increased manifold. This review article basically looks into that how the habit of tobacco consumption acts as a threat to development to human race.

**KEYWORDS:** Tobacco, Threat, Modernization

## PERSONAL INSIGHT

Right from the time I was a kid, I have seen my grandparents; my uncles consume tobacco. Since my grandparents used to live in village and consumption of tobacco is very common in rural areas, especially in northern India, I used to sometimes think that it is the most important thing to survive on earth after oxygen. I still remember that my grandfather used to have a small metallic box with chambers and it used to house tobacco, lime, areca nut and some other items of his and at that time it was one of the most prized possession of his and if by any chance that box used to go missing, we the children in the house used to face the wrath of his anger. Being unaware of the harmful effects of the consumption of tobacco, my young mind always used to think that what is so enchanting about tobacco that everyone seems so fascinated by it. Thanks to my parents who always told that tobacco is definitely not good for consumption as it causes ill health, we were never attracted towards it. When I was 13 years old, one of our acquaintance in our native village developed throat cancer. Seeing his suffering made me really sad. When I asked my father that what is the reason for his condition, he told that it is because of consumption of tobacco that he has developed cancer and that is the only reason for his current condition. I decided that day that I am going to make people aware of the ill effects of tobacco consumption and the complications it can lead too. As a matter of fact, if an individual develops cancer due to tobacco consumption not only the person concerned but the whole family suffers. So as a society it should be our effort to make sure that awareness about the ill effects of tobacco consumption is spread amongst everybody and this world can be made a much better place to live.

Now as the topic of this essay says “Tobacco: A threat to development” I would like to completely support this argument that right from farming of tobacco to the point it is consumed by the customer, it acts as a threat to our development as a society. Thus tobacco is not only a threat to individual health, but also to the cause of social and environmental justice. As a society, it is high time

now that we decide that what is development in a real sense. Is it just the blind industrial development without caring about the consequences or it is the develops a person by promoting good health in the society and causing a moral development.

Well, cultivation and sale of tobacco do bring lots of money. All the current stars are ready to endorse the tobacco products as again we look for short terms gain in the form of money, but on the long run, it is just ruining our society as a whole.

Some of the specific areas where tobacco acts as a threat to development have been discussed in the article.

## TOBACCO AND CHILD LABOUR

Children are future of our country ;they are the ones who will take forward our country . Education is the basic human right that every child should get. But as tobacco cultivation is done by poor farmers they tend to employ young children for working as they provide very cheap labor.<sup>1</sup>

Families that do farming of tobacco often have to make the difficult decision between having their children work or go to school. Unfortunately working often dominates education because tobacco farmers, especially in the developing world, cannot make enough money from their crop to survive without the cheap labor that children provide. Hence because of their use as labor they are deprived of their basic right to education and if the current generation does not get an opportunity to study it will seriously hamper the development of our country in the future.

The government should implement laws related to child labor very strictly. If any person is found indulging in child labor, the punishment for this should be very strict. If we want to make India a world leader by 2050, we have to make sure that every child gets equal opportunity to study and hence child labor should be totally prohibited.

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## TOBACCO AND ECONOMY

The cultivation of tobacco is financially detrimental to the countries that produce it, more so for the developing countries. When resources are put into tobacco production, they are taken away from food production which is the basic necessity for human race. Large amounts of firewood, that could be used domestically for fuel and heating, are instead used for the curing of tobacco which is a big loss for such an important resource. A large percent of the profits from tobacco production go to large tobacco companies rather than local tobacco farmers. Also many countries have government subsidies for tobacco farming. All these factors result in huge profit for big companies but the small farmers keep suffering. Hence if the cultivation of tobacco continues it will result in poor becoming poorer and rich becoming richer. If we invest the resources in the food industry, it will be of great help for our country and also for our future generations.<sup>2</sup>

## TOBACCO AND ENVIRONMENT

Tobacco production requires the use of a lot of pesticides. Tobacco companies recommend up to 16 different applications of pesticides just in the period between planting the seeds in greenhouses and transplanting the young plants to the field. Pesticide use has been worsened by the desire to produce larger crops in less time because of the decreasing market value of tobacco. Pesticides often harm tobacco farmers because they are unaware of the health effects and the proper safety protocol for working with pesticides. These pesticides as well as fertilizers, end up in the soil, the waterway and the food chain. Coupled with child labor, pesticides pose an even greater threat. Early exposure to pesticides may increase a child's lifelong cancer risk as well as harm his or her nervous and immune systems. The combination of carcinogenic tar and radiation in a sensitive organ such as lungs increases the risk of cancer. If the smoker also breathes in the asbestos fibers which commonly occur in urban and industrial environments, the risk of cancer is greatly increased. Thus, if the cultivation of tobacco continues there will be continuous harm to the environment. Now it is up to us to decide whether we want development at the cost of the environment being harmed or look at the broader picture of stopping the cultivation of tobacco.<sup>3</sup>

Looking at all the harms caused by using tobacco along with the threat posed by the cultivation of tobacco make us ponder that whether we should at this stage think off completely stopping the cultivation of tobacco and saving our future generations.

Including tobacco control as a development issue can

restore the humanity of the development agenda, moving beyond a focus solely on economic growth. The evidence for tobacco control as an important investment in development is clear. The macroeconomic costs of tobacco use can be avoided, the pain and suffering of tobacco-related diseases can be reduced and the relationship between tobacco use and poverty can be broken.<sup>4</sup>

Strong tobacco control measures can help raise the standard of living of families and communities and enable them to realize their aspirations and potential. In addition, tobacco control measures may reinforce the importance of embedding economic activity within the principles of a society that values human dignity and serves the common good. The interests of powerful, transnational economic entities should not be prioritized over the general welfare, whether it be tobacco companies or other actors, which exploit the public for private gain. Eliminating the tobacco threat by implementing tobacco control measures will help countries achieve the sustainable development goals.

## CONCLUSION

As it is said "tobacco companies kill their best customers", we should stop being prey to the gimmicks of tobacco companies which portray tobacco and its products to be associated with machoism and smartness. It is now time that we honestly choose between tobacco and health. Let's now join hands and take a pledge that we would be stopping the use of tobacco completely, then the sales, as well as profits of tobacco companies will come down, and this will result in the lesser production of tobacco. To conclude I would like to say that tobacco is not only a threat to development, but also to human race. So if we want that future generations do not curse us, we should completely stop the use of tobacco and make this world a beautiful place to live in.

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