

## Smoking: Fashion or Habit for Indian Women

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### **Abstract**

*In India, tobacco usage in women has doubled in the last five years, according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS). The survey also found that the frequency of cigarette smoking per day by women is higher than the frequency of 6.1 by men. Further, one in five women in central India consumes tobacco and one in three women consumes tobacco in eastern India. There are different variety of tobacco's which have already used by women. 1 The hookah or water pipe: It is also known as shisha or 'hubbly bubbly' and is commonly used in parts of Asia, the Mediterranean and North Africa.*

*Bidi: This is the most used type of tobacco in India. It is commonly used throughout south-east Asia. Clay pipes: Clay pipes, also known as suipa, chillum and hookli, are widely used in Southeast Asia. Chewing tobacco: Tobacco is used orally throughout the world but principally in Southeast Asia. In Mumbai, India, 56 percent of women chew tobacco. Pan Masala, a popular chewing tobacco in India, consists of tobacco, areca nut and staked lime. This masala is usually wrapped in a betel leaf but can be served without the leaf. Inhale it, sniff it, chew it, or mix it with other ingredients – there is no safe way of using tobacco. Smoking is a habit that hits directly at a person's basic living system – the lungs. It's been a rather manly thing to smoke. Over the years, the tobacco companies had perfected the art of targeting the men with macho ads associated with smoking (Marlboro etc.)*

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**Key words:** *misuse of liberal world, lack of values, worst results, Indian govt.*



***Every cigarette takes seven minutes off your life.***

***Stop smoking***

Women comprise about 20 percent of the world's smokers, who account to more than one billion. Nearly 22 percent of women in developed countries and 9 percent of women in developing countries smoke tobacco. Although in developing countries the rate of smoking among women is going down, the epidemic of tobacco use among women is increasing. Especially troubling is the rising prevalence of tobacco use among girls.

In India, tobacco usage in women has doubled in the last five years, according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS). The survey also found that the frequency of cigarette smoking per day by women is higher than the frequency of 6.1 by men. Further, one in five women in central India consumes tobacco and one in three women consumes tobacco in eastern India. There are different variety of tobacco's which have already used by women.

**Types of Tobacco use**

- 1. Cigarettes:** Cigarettes are available throughout the world. Although filter-tipped cigarettes are more popular, hand-rolled cigarettes are also widely smoked in many countries.
- 2. Cigars:** Cigars are used throughout the world. Cheroots and stumpen are western and central European variations. Conical cheroots or 'dhumtis' are used in India.
- 3. The hookah or water pipe:** It is also known as shisha or 'hubbly bubbly' and is commonly used in parts of Asia, the Mediterranean and north Africa.
- 4. Bidi:** This is the most used type of tobacco in India. It is commonly used throughout south-east Asia.
- 5. Clay pipes:** Clay pipes, also known as suipa, chillum and hookli, are widely used in Southeast Asia.
- 6. Chewing tobacco:** Tobacco is used orally throughout the world but principally in Southeast

Asia. In Mumbai, India, 56 percent of women chew tobacco. Pan masala, a popular chewing tobacco in India, consists of tobacco, areca nut and staked lime. This masala is usually wrapped in a betel leaf but can be served without the leaf.

**7. Moist snuff:** Moist snuff is taken orally. A small amount of ground tobacco is held in the mouth between the cheek and the gum. Also known as ‘khaini’, it is sold these days packaged into small paper or cloth packets to make the product easier to use.

**8. Dry snuff:** It is a powdered tobacco that is inhaled through the nose or taken by mouth. Quite popular in India, although its use is now in decline.

**Inhale it, sniff it, chew it, or mix it with other ingredients – there is no safe way of using tobacco.**

Smoking is a habit that hits directly at a person’s basic living system – the lungs. Its been a rather manly thing to smoke. Over the years, the tobacco companies had perfected the art of targeting the men with macho ads associated with smoking (Marlboro etc.)

**Uneven liberal women’s world:** A woman wants to assert her freedom in today’s world, she wants to emulate all the wrongs that man perpetuates in this world. Instead of showing a new path, an “educated and liberal” woman’s psyche and definition of power, freedom and expression is tied to man’s world.

*Lack of moral and values*



For a long time, smoking amongst women has been related to lack of morals. Whenever a woman is depicted as a vamp or an adulteress in the movies or media, she is shown smoking. But the new adopters over the past century have changed that view. These days, as the society

becomes more prosperous and taken on Western mores, it slowly takes on the unhealthy habits as well. More and more people adapt to non-vegetarian diet instead of vegetarian one – which hurts both health of people as well as the environment (for example, It takes up to 16 pounds of grain to produce just one pound of meat, and even fish on fish farms must be fed 5 pounds of wild-caught fish to produce one pound of farmed fish flesh). And more and more people, especially women taken up smoking

***Lack of understanding; myth or real:*** Advertisers and tobacco companies have also worked very hard at hooking women to this habit through innovatively sinister campaigns. Virginia Slims, for example, has singularly been instrumental in creating the niche of women smoking and deepening the pockets of many tobacco companies around the world as the new market developed. The myth that women believe in, especially the younger groups, is that cigarettes make women more seductive, but this is merely a false image of vitality, emancipation, slimness, sophistication and sexual allure. The primary factor that leads women to fag is depression. The work pressure in the office, less time to spend with husband and children, family jangles lead them to follow suit.

***Statistical data of smoking among the Indian female:*** According to the latest study, about 250 million women in the world are daily smokers – 22% being from high resource countries and 9% from low and middle resource countries. And the Atlas says India ranks third in the top 20 female smoking populations across the globe. The statistics are eye opening. Only 20% of the total tobacco consumed in India is in the form of cigarettes, about 40% is in the form of *bidis* and the remaining 40% is consumed as chewing tobacco. While urban women believe that smoking dulls the appetite and helps them stay slim, the rural women get addicted to *bidis* by default as they are required to light up their husband's hukka's. The smoking statistics are not just figures. What they actually mean is that a teeming number of women are prone to various diseases caused by smoking. They are at a higher risk level than their opposite sex.





### Worst result of smoking

Smoking creates health problems among women especially reproductive health .It not only adversely affect the health of eggs produced; it could compromise the health of the expectant mother and the foetus. It is true for passive smokers as well. Tobacco consumers are more vulnerable to disease especially cancer and particularly lung cancer. There are many factors leading to increase in women smoking. Smoking dulls the appetite and is seen as convenient and easy way of following diet plan to help weight loss. In rural areas by default women catch the smoking habit as they are required to light their husband's hukkas .Some women smoke beedis as past time.

**Strong Steps by Indian government:** Indian government should do more public awareness campaigns. The other ways would be more stringent legislation, high pricing and pictorial warnings on cigarette packs. Latest studies are now showing that the nicotine marketing drive has increased the strike rate for lung cancer in Indian women, this according to a report out on May 31, 2010 - World Tobacco Day. This year again W.H.O's (*World Health Organisation*) theme for the year is "Gender and tobacco with an emphasis on marketing to women". This is to bring attention to the harmful results of tobacco marketing to women and girls as a considerable increase in smokers among literate women, especially young college girls and BPO workers has been observed.

### Conclusion

Smoking is a major cause of ill-health and premature death among women in many countries and this is increasing rapidly. Even in countries where smoking is still low among women, many women's lives are already negatively affected by smoking, for example through their husbands' spending scarce resources on cigarettes, their constant exposure to second-hand smoke and, increasingly, having to cope with a spouse's death from smoking. While religious

and cultural attitudes, often combined with low economic status, have kept female smoking levels low in many countries, history shows that unless strong, comprehensive tobacco control policies are implemented, female smoking prevalence will increase. The tobacco industry has identified women as a key target group around the world. Countries with newly opened markets, such as China and Eastern Europe, or which have no restrictions on tobacco promotion, are particularly vulnerable to mass targeting by the tobacco industry.

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