DYING IN SLOW MOTION
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Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances known to mankind. Including nicotine, tobacco contains more than 4000 harmful chemicals, among then 400 are deadly toxic and carcinogenic.

Smoking is socially accepted practice in India. We rank second to china in producing 7 lakh metric tons of tobacco by using 5 lakh hectares of land. The variety forms like Cigarettes, Bidis, Cigars, Gutka, Snuf, Hukkah, Pan-masla, Khaini etc., of tobacco use is unique to India. Bidis are most popular as poor man's smoke. Seven Bidis are sold for every Cigarette.

Nicotine is the deadliest poison known to mankind. Decoction of one Cigarette, if injected will kill a man with in seconds. Tobacco usage is causing 5 millions deaths in the world and 8 lakh in India. Half of those killed by tobacco were of middle age (35 to 69 years) and they are losing 25 years of life. Each Cigarette is taking 7 minutes of life span. Poor Countries and poor population is the main victims of tobacco. Loss of DALY (one lost year of healthy life) is exceeding 60 million. Economic loss is $400 billion per year.

It has been proven beyond doubt that tobacco causes many serious diseases (Table 1). Smoking or Tobacco use affects almost all organs of the body. There is enough evidence to show that earlier the person begins tobacco, greater is the risk of getting life threatening diseases and early death. Death toll due to tobacco is five times higher than deaths due to Accidents, Murder, Fire, Disaster, Suicide, Alcohol and HIV all put together.

The use of tobacco has reached the proportion of an epidemic. Over 15 million Cigarettes are smoked worldwide every day. On average an Indian smokes 130 cigarette per year, 35% men and 19% women are using chewing tobacco.

Tobacco consumption is decreasing slowly in developed countries by awareness. Contrarily it is raising rapidly in developing countries like ours. In India recent survey has shown that 17% of students (13-15 years) are using tobacco in some or other form. Alarmingly highest use of tobacco among school going children has been observed in Nagaland (63%), Manipur and Sikkim (46%). In India every day 6000 adults and 150 teenagers start smoking.

Because of the long delay between use & effect, people tend to misjudge the hazards of tobacco. When a young adult begins to use tobacco, he will not witness the slow motion killing power of tobacco till he reaches middle age. The best historical evidence is seen in USA, where smoking was at peak during 1945 and then lung cancers were rare. After 40 years (1985) lung cancer of this population raised sharply about 20 folds.

Second hand (passive) Smoking:
Smoking harms non-smokers too. Breathing the smoke left by smokers is called passive smoking. Main stream of smoke is inhaled & exhaled by smoker. Side stream of smoke comes from burning (700 to 800°C) tip of the cigarette, which is more dangerous. About 35% of non-smokers are exposed to the risk of passive smoking at home, office, work places. Second hand smoking continuous to accumulate and increases the risk of fatal diseases. Passive smoking is deadlier than what we think. Now third hand smoking is also fishing the life of man.

Control
Tobacco menace can be controlled by.

- Prevention of tobacco initiation.
- Cessation of tobacco use.
- Implementation of regulatory methods

The best way to keep away from tobacco is not to start. Focusing in this, all functionaries, particularly doctors, school teachers, parents, friends, mass media and politicians should educate & motivate individuals to play significant role in tobacco control by being good role models. Just halving the current tobacco use, we can win at least 30 million deaths before 2020.

Quitting smoking & tobacco use at any stage is beneficial to health. A large number of tobacco

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users are willing to quit the habit but they cannot do so easily. Because of withdrawal symptoms quitting the habit requires lot of strong motivation, will power and help of doctors, counselors, skill trainers, social supporters, nicotine replacement therapy and many more. Good habits kill the bad habits. The best way to break the habit is to cultivate good habits.

Key message is “Stop tobacco in any forms from today itself. Do not start if you are non-user”. 