



Disposal of Cigarette Butts

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Why in News

Recently, the **National Green Tribunal** (NGT) has directed the **Central Pollution Control Board** (CPCB) to lay down guidelines pertaining to **disposal of cigarette and beedi butts** within three months.

NGT held that tobacco is undoubtedly harmful and it is mainly concerned with the manner of disposal of cigarette and beedi butts.

Key Points

- **Background:**
 - An NGO '**Doctors for You**' sought instructions to **regulate the disposal** of cigarette and beedi butts apart from **prohibiting the consumption of tobacco in public places**.
 - The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare highlighted that cigarette and beedi butts are not biodegradable but the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change noted that these are **not listed as hazardous**.
- **CPCB Report:**
 - A report by CPCB highlighted that the analysis of the cigarette and beedi butts reflects that their **concentrations detected will not be toxic to humans and the environment**.
 - **Cellulose acetate** is a major component (95%) of the cigarette butts **along with the wrapping paper and rayon** and its degradation studies show that it will persist for a longer duration.
 - However, the **toxicity data for cellulose acetate is not available yet**.

- **Findings of a Study:**
 - A study conducted by the **Indian Institute of Toxicology Research** (IITR) **approves the CPCB report** and holds that the concentration of various parameters analysed is lower than the prescribed limits and will not be toxic.
 - It added that **natural environmental conditions and laboratory stimulating conditions would be required** to conclude the safety or toxicity of cigarette butts to further correlate with human and environmental health risk assessment.
- **Suggestions:**
 - An **inter-ministerial or departmental committee should be constituted** to consult at the national level for conducting an impact study of discarded cigarette and beedi butts and spitting of tobacco products in public places.
 - **Recycling of cellulose acetate** after recovery from cigarette butts may be an immediate solution to the problem.
 - There is a **need for more studies and research** so that degradation and safety data can be generated which would be helpful in forming guidelines.

Steps Taken by the Indian Government to Control Tobacco Consumption

- **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC):**
 - It is the **first international treaty** negotiated under the auspices of the **World Health Organisation**.
 - 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.
 - **India ratified it in 2004.**
- **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 with dynamic support.
- **Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Amendment Rules, 2020:**

These **rules** have been notified by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to amend the 2008 rules which were notified under the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003.
- **National Tobacco Control Programme:**
 - The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare **launched the programme in 2007-08.**
 - It aims to **facilitate the effective implementation of the Tobacco Control Law**, to bring about greater awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco as well as to fulfil the obligations under the WHO-FCTC.

- **Other Efforts:**

- **World No Tobacco Day:** Every year, 31st May is observed as the **World No Tobacco Day** by WHO and global partners.

The annual campaign is an opportunity to raise awareness on the harmful and deadly effects of tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure, and to discourage the use of tobacco in any form.

- Since 2007, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been pushing to introduce **stronger graphic health warnings on tobacco packets**, with mixed success.

Source: TH