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India Consumes Lowest Number Of Cigarettes Per Annum

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 THIS STORY IS FROM DECEMBER 11, 2012

India consumes lowest number of cigarettes per annum

[Hetal Vyas](#) / TNN / Updated: Dec 11, 2012, 12:17 IST

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BANGALORE: This news is 'catchy' and quite literally. The 3rd edition of the [Cigarette Package Health Warnings: International Status Report](#), released by [Canadian Cancer Society](#) says: only 63 out of 198 countries have adopted pictorial warnings including India. The report in its chapter Tobacco Atlas (3rd edition) said, "India's per capita consumption of cigarettes is the lowest in the world at 99 cigarettes per annum. Whereas Japan consumes the highest number of cigarettes per annum at 2028." "There has been tremendous progress internationally in implementing package warnings, with many countries increasing warning size, more countries requiring picture warnings, and an increasing number of countries on their second, third or even fourth round of picture warnings. The worldwide trend for larger, picture health warnings is growing, with many more countries in the process of developing such requirements," the report said. Compared to global standards, the report is quite welcoming, but there is a catch here. "India might be doing better than other developed countries like Germany, Italy, Spain and Japan or even its best competitor country China when it comes to 'displaying' pictorial warnings on the tobacco product packets, but 'the pictures are either very small or meaningless,' said Dr Upendra Bhojani, faculty, [Institute of Public Health](#) (IPH), Bangalore.

Dr Vishal Rao, consultant oncologist and head and neck surgeon: "From Canadian perspective India might be doing well in displaying the pictorial images on tobacco products but, the standards are not complied with. Even the pictures are not changed every year, which is mandatory." A special committee was constituted in India a few years back to look in to the issue but it had members which had conflict of interest. Said Dr Bhojani: "Compared to India, countries like Thailand displays much bigger and visible images on packets of tobacco products. In India, the authorities had first proposed to display a picture on 50% of the front panel of the packet, which has been gradually reduced to 40%. The pictures too are very vague, of an x-rayed chest or a healthy lung, which nobody would relate to."

Explaining the reason behind low consumption of cigarettes in India, Dr Rao explained: "In India [cigarette consumption](#) is low because most of our population smokes beedis, chiroots or hookahs, which are not considered as [smoking](#) tobacco products at Global standard. Biggest flow is beedis, which is high on Tar and is available very cheaply. So figure of 99 cigarettes per annum (per smoker) is highly misleading." Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) India 2010 Report had revealed that cigarettes account for only 15 per cent of the tobacco consumption in India. "Eighty-five per cent of the tobacco consumption in India comprises of smokeless tobacco (chewing tobacco products like gutka, khaini) and beedis. These low priced, low taxed products are immensely popular in rural markets of India and do not adopt pictorial and /or text warnings. 34.6 % adult use tobacco in India , Smokeless tobacco users are 25.9% , Beedi user are 9.2 % and Cigarette users are 5.7 % of the adult population," concluded the report. Consumption of cigarettes in other countries

Country	No. of cigarettes consumed
Japan	2028
China	1646
Pakistan	391
Nepal	274
Bangladesh	172
India	99

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About the Author

[Hetal Vyas](#)

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Hetal Vyas has been covering legal news since 2005 and joined The Times of India in September 2010. She is currently

Principal Correspondent. Legal. and covers the Bombay High Court for the Metro team.

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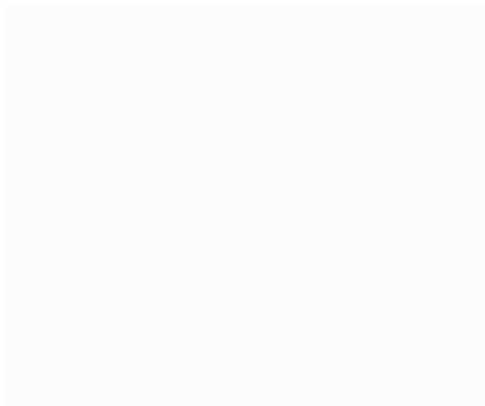
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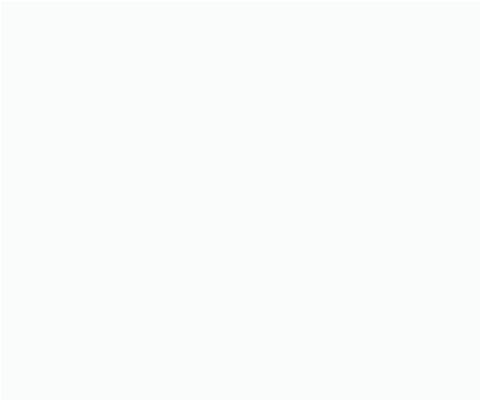
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