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'28 per cent people consume tobacco in India'

Govt should frame policy on tobacco usage, say activists

DHNS

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Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM) founder R. Balasubramaniam said more than 28 per cent of people in the country consume tobacco and every year 620 lakh tonnes of tobacco is grown in the country.

He was speaking at the lecture organised on the occasion of World Tobacco-free Day organised by SVYM at Mysore Medical College and Research Institute here on Monday.

Balasubramaniam disclosed that tobacco consumption in Bangalore alone generates a revenue of Rs 600 crore. While banning tobacco products would result in huge revenue loss, it would prevent expenditure of Rs 30 crore on battling health hazards.

The government need not depend on the revenue generated by using tobacco. Instead, it should give more emphasis on collecting pending revenue, such as Rs 900 crore which is pending in Bangalore.

Policy

The issue of license for tobacco has been discussed several times in the Parliament. But, it has failed to ban tobacco. They argue that lakhs of beedi workers would be unemployed.

However, the government can create a policy to provide alternate employment for beedi workers, he added.

Mysore Medical College and Research Institute director Dr Geetha Avadhani said consuming tobacco leads to heart attacks and cancer. Several people continue to smoke even though they know it is dangerous to health, she added.

Prizes were distributed to winners of fine arts, essay writing competition, which were held to mark anti-tobacco day.

Earlier, district health officer S. Malegowda inaugurated a rally on World Tobacco-free Day at Gandhi Square.

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